PUBLIC
S.F.
LIBRARY

MAIN LIBRARY

A

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

CAVEAT SINE LITERIS MORS EST

782 ZK84s

311819

ADRM 3431 7-53

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1223 00368 6889

DATE DUE

SFP' FEB 5 '81
MAR 2 1982
BFPL AUG 9-'82
JUL 26 1997

DEMCO 38-297

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/buildingamateuro0000ralp

Scene from "Mona," Act III, by Horatio Parker

Building The Amateur Opera Company

A Guide for prospective organizers of Amateur Opera Companies, offering helpful suggestions as to selection of efficient officers and directors, together with practical advice as to development and capable functioning of the Chorus, Ballet and Orchestra

by

RALPH H. KORN

(Author of "How to Organize the Amateur Band and Orchestra")

CARL FISCHER, Inc.
COOPER SQUARE
New York

252 Tremont Street
Boston, Mass.

430 S. Wabash Avenue
Chicago, Ill.

Copyright, 1930,
By
CARL FISCHER, Inc.
NEW YORK

International Copyright Secured

782
ZK84b
311819

PRINTED IN U. S. A.
CONWAY PRINTING COMPANY
NEW YORK

Building The Amateur Opera Company

CONTENTS

Publisher's Note I

Preface V

Foreword VII

Chapter

I. A Few Facts for the Many 1

II. Organization—Officers 8

III. Our Officers and Their Duties 18

IV. Our Chorus 28

V. Our Ballet 32

VI. Our Orchestra 36

VII. Our Stage Director's Realm 41

VIII. Building Our Company 46

IX. Rehearsing 51

X. Casting Our Characters 58

XI. Final Touches 65

XII. The Performance 70

In Conclusion 75

Illustrations

Frontispiece

Scene from "Mona," Act III
by Horatio Parker

Scene from "Cyrano," Act III
by Walter Damrosch, opp. page 18

Scene from "Cleopatra's Night"
by Henry Hadley, opp. page 28

Scene from "The King's Henchman"
by Deems Taylor, opp. page 58

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The purpose of this little book is to create interest in amateur operatic performances in communities by local talent. In addition it offers constructive advice how this can be carried out to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Within a few years the "Little Theatre Movement" has met with encouraging success in both small and large communities, and there is no reason why a similar movement concerned with operatic production should not materialize within the near future.

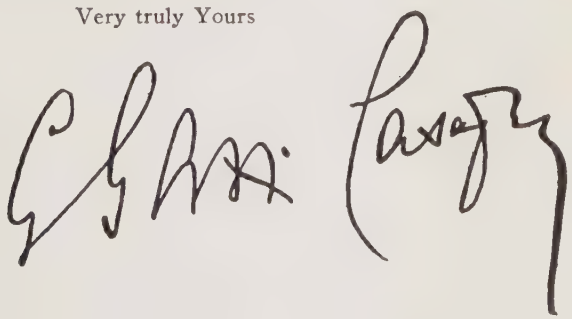
This book offers exhaustive information to that end and it is a privilege and a pleasure to submit the following letters from outstanding authorities in the field of operatic endeavor as endorsements thereof.

From Giulio Gatti-Casazza, General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera Company of New York City.

DEAR MR. KORN:

All well directed amateur opera organizations deserve encouragement. Especially is this so in a country like the United States, where the city, state or nation gives no subsidy to opera seasons as is done in many countries in Europe. If opera is to become a widespread and popular form of artistic entertainment in America, it must be through such agencies as artistic and seriously directed amateur companies in provincial cities. Your book "Building the Amateur Opera Company" shows how this can be accomplished and should be an important contribution to the literature bearing on this subject.

Very truly Yours

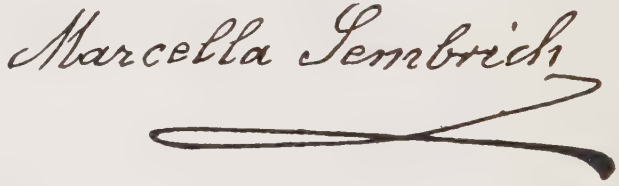


From Mme. Marcella Sembrich, eminent prima donna formerly with the Metropolitan Opera Company, now master teacher at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and the Juilliard Graduate School of Music, New York City.

Dear Mr. Korn:

I have read with interest the page-proof copy of your book, "Building the Amateur Opera Company" and hope this book will arouse widespread interest in the cause you put forth with convincing clarity and likewise awaken the desire to carry out your suggestions. It would be of unquestionable value to the promising talent in America, if in numerous cities here, there were regular standing opera companies, similar to those established in countless towns in the European countries. Only then could young American singers acquire proper operatic experience in their country and in their own language.

Cordially yours,



From Artur Bodanzky, for more than fourteen years a leading conductor of the Metropolitan Opera Company, also conductor of the Society of the Friends of Music.

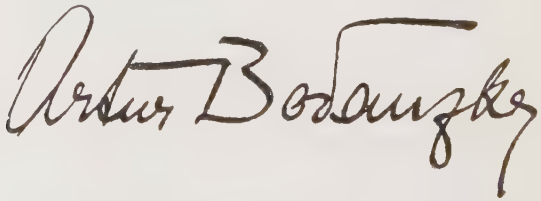
My Dear Mr. Korn:

I have read your "Building the Amateur Opera Company" with keen interest, and I want to tell you that your cause appeals to me very much.

Your book tells its own story in such a plain and straightforward fashion, and it covers the subject and makes its points in such a way, that, I think, it will attract to it and win for the cause many friends.

Wishing you great success in your undertaking.

I am, very sincerely yours,



From Walter Damrosch, renowned American composer, conductor, educator.

DEAR MR. KORN:

I have read the page-proof copy of your new book "Building the Amateur Opera Company" with interest. I certainly believe that all such efforts to popularize good music should be encouraged, and your suggestions seem to me practical and to the point. I hope your book will succeed in arousing a proper appreciation of the great opera composers among our amateur singers.

Very sincerely yours,

In view of these endorsements from some of the most distinguished authorities in the field, it seems only fair to anticipate that this little book will perform signal service in the cause of amateur opera in America.

THE PUBLISHERS

PREFACE

THIS book was not written merely for the casual reader; if, at first it can win his interest, if, later on, it can win his support, then the casual reader will have become an ardent worker. It is for such that this book has been prepared, with the greatest care and the utmost consideration.

Nor was this book designed for surface reading. The reader is warned to read, and then to read again, until the author's meaning is exactly understood. In such a work as this, the first of its kind, the only one in its field, it must, of necessity, carve its own niche and make its own path. What at first appear to be needless windings, unnecessary repetitions, will be found, later on, to be the very shortest cuts toward the intended goal. This matter had to be presented to meet many types of mind; therefore it had to be presented in several different forms. As a result, the reader will be caught at every turn, and shown what can be done, what has been done, what still remains to be done —and how all is to be done, so that the success of the enterprise shall be secured by proper endeavor.

The author has not sought for literary roundness, fullness and smoothness; whatever else it may be, this book is, above all else, a guidebook, a textbook. Nor has the author attempted anything more than a straightforward presentation of actual facts as they now, today, at this very moment, concern those for whom they have been gathered and to whom they are here presented. These facts concern you, if you now are, or ever become, a worker for a wider presentation, a deeper understanding, a keener appreciation, of opera, in America. And this, the author feels, can best be realized through the formation, the country over, of the amateur opera company.

Here we find ourselves in an altogether untrod field, so vast that none can say what it may hold. But there is the

promise of adventure and the glamor of probable discovery. As amateurs we have gone pioneering! Who knows what we may recover or uncover? The American composer, who has failed to come to light through every other source may yet receive his due through the efforts we shall make—so that hope exists that what the amateur opera company shall find may become the foundation upon which shall be built an actual American operatic art. However great the sacrifice and however hard the struggle, if this can be accomplished, it surely will have been enough!

The reader should bear in mind that wherever the words of an opera have come into the speech of the land, and where ever the native voice of the land has sung these words so that they were understandable to an audience native to that land, there has grown up a native, home-made and home-grown operatic art; why not then, here in America? The reader should recall another fact. Librettist and composer grow by experience. So Verdi and Wagner grew; so may many an American creator of opera grow! But the same conditions must obtain. The native composer, to be properly interpreted to his native audience, must be heard through the voices of native singers—at least, and at any rate, at first, and, more especially, in his own America. This, the author feels, can be done best by the amateur opera company. From the stages of the amateur opera company may come many a composition to grace the stages of the professional opera company; and the voices which shall fill the roles may well rise from the same source. Here rises Hope, but not by any means a too vast hope!

If, now, you read, let it be to join and work! If, then, you join and work, let it be without fear or favor, without prejudice or pettiness! Let us put an amateur opera company in every American community capable of supporting it! Then, with criticism that shall help to build, with enterprise that shall make more firm the building,—with our eyes fixed on our goal—which must forever await us,—let us build our American operatic art—patiently, persistently, proudly!

FOREWORD

SO FAR as is known to me, this is the only work of its kind. So far as I know, there is no other book that makes any attempt to show how an amateur opera company may be formed. I believe that such a work as this will open up a new field for amateur musicians, since amateurs, of whatever persuasion, are always and ever the pioneers in their chosen fields. It was the amateur who first dabbled in opera—and see what has happened to that idea! Practically every important nation now boasts its national operas, save only America! Well, we may yet find our soil a most fruitful garden.

Time was when foreigners, (and Americans who loved to pose with foreigners!), were insistent that we were a young people, and therefore could not hope for much in the way of our own arts. As time passed, these changed their tune: for the American singer had a way of breaking through and even the American instrumentalist had a way of breaking through; and doubly difficult as was his task, even the American composer had a way of breaking through! So, once again, these people changed their tune: now, to be sure, we were not quite so young a nation—but we had so little to say in the way of art—we were not even overly original in what little we had to say—and, what is worse, (they would tell us, with every show of seriousness as well as with every symptom of patronage!), we said it in some foreign way—anyway—so why not have the foreign works and be content with them?

Today, again, their tune is being changed! Partly due to the World War, we have begun to find ourselves, artistically. There have been other causes for our musical awakening, but these do not so nearly concern us as does the present peculiar combination of conditions which finds America the financial center of the world, which finds America literally flooded with the artists of every land

which boasts an art, and which finds America without her own National Conservatory of Music! Artistically we may be having a high old time, but most assuredly we have been paying far too much for the privilege of having that high old time!

In other words, to a somewhat altered melody we are still hearing the old refrain, "Sleep, America!—sleep! For you we'll sing a tune: only sleep on and on, for if you wake too soon, we may find ourselves 'in wrong'—you may then lead in song!"

Now, of course, that is not precisely the whole story! But there is this much truth in it,—that America has been paying too much for what she has been receiving, and practically all that she has been paying has been paid to "outlanders." It is time that America began to look to her own for her art—not to crowd foreign art or artist out but to crowd American artist, and as soon as possible, American art, in! We should repeat that until it becomes our national slogan! We should plan for it, and we should build for it! And, as heretofore, for pioneer work in this field we must turn to our amateurs!

Put an amateur opera company in our community and you at once give the American artist a chance to interpret the works of the great masters: and, by that same token, you give the American composer his chance to create, and to perfect his creations! Wagner and Verdi did not jump into fame: they grew! It is unfair to say that Victor Herbert or Horatio Parker failed as operatic composers. It was America that failed—in not giving such composers their right measure of opportunity! You may tell me that the right man can not be kept down—and I will tell you that you can make it mighty hard for even the right man to come up!

Organize the amateur opera company in your community, and you at once open up a field full of promise. There is the orchestra, the chorus, the ballet, the principal singers of the company—each with opportunity for an art of its own! Because the orchestra may function alone or with any of

the others in combination: because the chorus and the ballet and principal singers may appear each as a separate unit or in combination with the orchestra: because the orchestra, chorus, and principal singers may appear in oratorio: and because all may function together, when so called upon to function—either in opera or in that lighter form of opera, comic opera! Here is a field in which our own may revel as amateurs—and grow into professionals! Here is where the amateur company may, in time, become a recognized, permanent part of our American communal life—and just about that time America will find herself with a thoroughly virile, upstanding, well-functioning Art of her own! The amateur opera company will not be very long in making itself very strongly felt!

Of course there will be opposition—for a time, perhaps, even, for a very long time as we count time, here, in America. Standpatters who stand in their own light and are too lazy to think for themselves, will listen to the howlings—and may be counted upon to howl a little, too! Nearly-Know-It-Alls, those shortsighted ones whose knowledge is mostly pose—these will join the howlers later,—since they are slow-moving, at best,—and may prolong this howling, somewhat, But not for too long—since America has the very best method at hand for combatting this, and that method is nothing less than EDUCATION! And this education will, of course, lead up to PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION!

And that is all that we shall need—just a few practical demonstrations, and then every American will be "long" on the amateur opera company in America! Of course the smaller cities and towns will become interested in this matter before any headway may be expected to be made in the larger cities. New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, such as these with their "fashionable" opera-seasons, will move slowly, very slowly, at first. But wait! Perhaps some progressive community may "back" its amateur opera company: perhaps, and sooner than now appears probable, America may have her National Conservatory—with a Secretary of

Education as a member of the Cabinet—and a progressive Federal Government may "back" those progressive States which are in "back" of such progressive communities as have had the foresight to "back" amateur opera companies! You see, it is merely a question of "stepping out!" Of stepping out bravely, purposefully and with every intention of making good! That success is assured is certain! If you want an art of your own you can have your own art, were Wagner's words to Germany, yesterday, and today Germany has her own art! Her opera houses dot the land, as some day our land will be dotted! If we want an art of our own we can have such an art! But to have our own art we must become "active wanters", actual builders, genuine hustlers in the enterprise! We must get together and put it over, after which, why, of course, we shall just naturally have our own art! And the short-cut to this end is the amateur opera company!

Build it, then, carefully and well! Build it firm and strong and put your best into the building! Let your neighboring community know what you are doing, so that it may take heart from your efforts, while you become doubly inspired through having given of your own inspiration to others! Help—and be helped thereby! Lend a hand—and grow stronger! No matter how discordant may be the howlings of the opposition, it shall not disturb the harmony of our own progress! Perhaps, even, it may give zest to our enterprise and strength to our hopes! Show folks that you are in earnest and the sneerer's sneer will soon change to the supporter's proud and active support! It is, in very truth, a very fine thing, this building of our own art! And let it be remembered that the foundation for such an art rests upon the amateur opera company—so build it very carefully and very well!

If these pages shall inspire to the effort, then the effort will inspire to the art—the art-to-be of a thoroughly artistic America! Let each do his part today, so that, tomorrow, we may have our art!

CHAPTER I.

A Few Facts for the Many

NOT so long ago I came before you with a message, which has since gone out into the world in the form of a book, entitled, "How to Organize the Amateur Band and Orchestra", which has been received with so much favor and goodwill that I dare to come before you with another message, equally important to the musical life and growth of America, and, I hope, quite as well-filled with that sort of inspiration which shall help those for whom it is intended. And this message of mine is nothing less than a call to you to make way for Amateur Opera in America!

I have no axe to grind; indeed there is no axe to grind. But I have quite a number of facts to present, facts which should open your eyes to certain very well-established truths: and these truths I hope you will consider with all that due care to which all Truth is justly entitled, by virtue of, and just because it is The Truth.

Right here and right now I want to emphatically make the point that there is no intention on my part of any suggestion of crowding out the foreign composer, or the foreign artist who interprets him. To crowd out such foreign creator or interpreter, either now or at any other time, will most certainly cramp our own efforts to build up an American art, even if it does not actually kill, not only such effort on our part, but our little, puny, struggling Art, itself! But I would crowd American Art and Artist in! I would crowd such Art and Artist in with all my might! I would like to see the day when the world's best opera included our own home-made American opera! I would very much welcome that particular moment when opera in America becomes the rule and not the exception: when American artists occupy American operatic stages: when,—ah, yes!—when? —the American public might sing and whistle and play

operatic airs—even as they now sing and whistle and play jazz!

To achieve even a small part of the foregoing, we must possess a knowledge of our subject, backed up by the common-sense needed to make proper use of such knowledge, and supported by our best endeavors to build up without tearing down—because,—and let this be always remembered, —there is absolutely nothing for us to tear down!

First, then, we must know what opera is, for there are many millions of Americans who have never witnessed an operatic performance,—(more's the pity!),—for whom this information must prove of real value, just as any and every other bit of information proves of real value. From such knowledge we shall gain a keener interest in operatic matters: we shall hold a higher appreciation for all those who have given their time, their thought, their means, to bring opera to us in America: we shall have a fuller understanding of the problems which have confronted them and which we ourselves will have to face: we shall have a keener realization of our unpayable debt to those who have done what they have done: and, let me voice the hope, all this will give us the courage as well as the inspiration to do every iota of our share which it is given to each one of us to do. And let us never forget those ringing words of Richard Wagner, who told his people, (now among the musical leaders of the world, but who, in his day were far from possessing even what we now possess!): "If you want your Art you can have your Art!"

So, then—let us get to work and see what this opera is all about, anyway!

We turn to Moore's "Encyclopaedia of Music," where, on page 672 we note the following description of opera: "A musical drama consisting of airs, recitatives, choruses, etc., enriched with magnificent scenery, machinery, and other decorations, and representing some passionate action." Then follows a story of opera's beginnings—a story far too long to be recounted here—but which you are urged to read, as, also, that remarkably clear as well as remarkably concise

account of this same subject from the pen of Mr. Ernest Newman, on page 216 of, "Music Lover's Cyclopedia." Here we may note Mr. Newman's tracings of the opera—Italian, French, English, German, Russian—and not a word concerning American! True! True? Ah—well!—in all truth we have little enough to offer—but—and we make a great deal of this but—we shall give much to the world of opera before very long! Another book which you might see with profit is Henry C. Lahee's, "Grand Opera in America."

From all that has been said you will of course realize that an operatic performance consists of many very different parts which are so cleverly as well as artistically combined as to represent a perfect, single, work of art. Also, it must have appeared quite obviously, that much very careful and painstaking training must precede any such performance. In addition, it must have been made fairly plain—at any rate I have tried so to make it—that we have something more than a mere trail to follow—that, as a matter of fact, due to the untiring labors of certain pioneers in this field, and thanks to their ceaseless efforts, we have what amounts to a road on which we may travel. True, this "road" is in many places unpaved—save where it is is paved with problems! But shall we be discouraged or dismayed or disheartened? Let us look to Mr. Henderson's "Some Forerunners of Italian Opera," from which we may learn much as to what much-vaunted Italy of operatic fame today possessed only yesterday! We shall profit much from the mistakes of our own pioneers, too: we shall bring with us a judgment upon the past that will give to us a safer, a sounder, and in some respects even a saner judgment with which to face and appraise with a keener sense of and for values, all that which lies ahead of us, operatically, in the future!

But I hear you asking me a very important question. And I am not ready nor am I willing to evade or run away from that question. As a matter of fact I happen to be ready, willing, and most anxious to answer that question, fully, freely and as frankly as it is possible for me to answer it!

And your question is this: "Suppose we grant that opera is not as widespread here in America as it very well might be, and suppose we also grant that we in America could not only develop artists as fine as any in the world no matter where found, as well as composers as great as have been discovered anywhere on our good old green globe—and suppose we grant, in addition, that all this is not only desirable but absolutely necessary to the growth and life of music here in America,—suppose all this to be true—will you please be so good as to tell us why, and, if possible will you tell us how, amateur opera companies can in any manner alter the situation which confronts us as you say it does—and will you show us why professional opera companies can not solve these problems with far greater success than could any amateur opera company—can it be possible that with the means at their disposal, professionals can be outdone by mere amateurs,—and do you even hold it as possible that what professionals fail to do, an amateur company could do,—do you mean us to gather that?"

And my answer is, Absolutely yes! Unqualifiedly yes! Most certainly yes! And more! I believe that my answer to that question, which shall be undertaken in a moment or two, will clearly explain just exactly why amateurs are required rather than professionals, in this particular matter. And then, if I can succeed in satisfying you on each and every point of your question, then, if you find the matter as I predict that you will find it, why then I shall ask you to follow me through these pages to where it will be possible to build up what we shall then have in mind. But now as to my answer:—

Without hesitation I declare that the professional opera company can not undertake either to discover the American, (or for that matter, any other), artist: because to be a professional implies that one is an artist. One can not sing with a professional opera company, and very rightly so, unless one has been thoroughly trained in the operatic art; were a non-professional to be permitted to go upon the operatic stage and sing before a critical operatic audience,

the whole performance might suffer and that company's reputation might be so badly damaged as to warrant loss of public confidence—which it has gained only because of its years of service well performed. The American artist, must, therefore, be trained all too often away from home and home surroundings and influences. While this may be very broadening in every other sense, it most certainly has tended to narrow America's chances for having an operatic art of her own: for which reason I am urging a distinct reversal of approach to this matter. Because, for one thing, it will be possible not only to train the artist-to-be at home, but, in addition, it will permit the artist so trained to retain at least some familiarity with his own native language—and that leads us directly to something else which the amateur opera company can do; and that is to make known to the American people the exact merits of her own operatic composers—did you ever happen to think of that? That is to say, assuming that there are any such in America—and there are two or three rumors that such is the case, at this particular moment.

Now let us look at it from this angle: How can a professional company afford to take chances with the work of an unknown composer? And how can a professional company afford to take too many chances even with the work of one whose work in other parts of the musical field has caused him to become fairly or even very well-known? But it is an altogether different matter as far as an amateur company would be concerned. As a matter of fact it would become both the duty as well as the privilege of such a company to bring out this sort of work, if, when and as it might be found! And there you are! Right here would be the field, and a fine and very wide open field, it is in very truth, where the amateur opera company, through its own efforts could be discovered as well as trained; not only the to-be American artist, but, in addition, the future American operatic composer!

Let it be known that the professional operatic companies have taken somewhat more chances than were even fairly safe, with native-born or even naturalized Americans—and

for this they deserve all credit. But the professional operatic stage, no more than any other professional field, may be made the training-ground for amateurs. There is, generally, a sufficient deficit—as it is! But there can be found no possibility of objection to the organization of a proper field where the composer or artist may be tested, and when found capable, passed to that stage where his work shall win for him the fame which he deserves and which is his by every right!

Taken by and large, then, I think you will agree with me when I say that there is a very well-marked field of usefulness, nay, more, a very justified demand, for amateur operatic companies in our Country. And I believe that you will further agree with me when I affirm that the proper place for such companies will be found to be our smaller cities and progressive, aggressive towns. For here, as a rule, the predilictions of one's neighbors become more readily discovered; and it should be here, as a matter of course, that his friends and neighbors, (who are, as a rule, only too happy to give him such help as they can), should see these tests made, and should these tests prove to be successful, then they should have their share in such successes,—which shall, to no small degree, bring well-deserved fame to his town as well as to its citizens.

Well, then—why not? Why not set out to organize just such a company right in your own home town? Certainly! You can and you should produce the works of the great masters of the operatic art,—for it is only so that you can ever come to know what the World of Opera considers to be good opera, as well as why such judgment is just what it is. Perhaps you will produce the works in their original tongue, or perhaps you may originate some translation of the text into somewhat more happy English or English that is more singable—which may win for it, as well as for yourself, a new and enviable place! There are, as you can very easily see for yourself, quite a number of ways in which an amateur opera company might find itself becoming of ever-increasingly valuable service to our community! Well, then, —why don't some of you hundred-per-centers start out to do

something that is both serious as well as sensible? Why don't you start a hunt for a Wagner or a Verdi, a Meyerbeer or a Halevy, or perhaps another Tschaikowsky? Why don't you go out and "bag" another Nordica, (whose real name was Norton), or a Patti? You might make it a whole lot easier for some of our struggling geniuses! You've heard pretty much about not being able to keep a good one down, but have you ever given a thought to how hard it can be made for that same good one to find it possible to come up? Here is a field altogether ripe—waiting for your best efforts! It has been very clearly indicated. In the pages which are to follow you will find each and every one of the steps needed to bring these thoughts into reality, very carefully outlined. Can I count on you to follow me? Here lies the road, stretching ahead before us: if you choose to come with me we shall follow it wherever it may lead us and however winding it may prove to be! Well, then,—do you dare to follow where this road shall lead? Remember—it is right up to you to answer! Where are you, Mr. Hundred-per-center?

Only let us recollect this: whatever else we may find, whatever else shall be our gain, (and, indeed, we may discover much and gather far more than we have now any right to either expect, or even predict), we shall come through with this mighty interesting little experiment of ours very greatly enriched as to our knowledge of music, generally, and of this operatic art, more particularly: we shall have learned how to disregard all petty prejudices: we shall have learned how best to avoid all silly squabblings: we shall have learned, once again, how to "join up," and then? Well, who knows? Perhaps we shall have given an art, altogether her own, to this America of ours!

CHAPTER II.

Organization—Officers

LET us assume that a little band of sturdy music-lovers has gathered for the purpose of doing something for the musical life of our small but progressive community. Let us further assume that this hardy aggregation of our town's people has elected to provide an amateur operatic company, which shall be an added means for the growth of musical life of our town. Well, then, just how shall we plan our project? Just exactly what shall be done to create that firm foundation upon which our hopes are to be reared? Just precisely what shall be our method of approach to this subject? Just how shall we proceed, step by step, to bring our thought into reality, to insure our ambition, to guard against defeated aspirations,—in a word, to turn probable failure into possible success?

In these days of large and always larger enterprise, we are learning to depend ever more and more upon organized effort. True, we must have leadership; and, equally true, this must, in the last analysis, spell individual effort—but we have learned that where the individual effort might not carry us very far, massed effort will most certainly cover considerable ground—more ground, as a rule, than, perhaps we had expected. So, in this endeavor, we shall at once proceed to lay our foundation. Which means that we shall begin to organize ourselves into a band of practical dreamers who are intent on bringing these fond dreams of ours into big and beautiful achievement. We are going to be progressive! And, if we have to be, we are going to be aggressive! We are going to give our time, our attention, our skill, and our talent, and perhaps a little of our means, to make our dreams come true! In fact, (and we admit it at once and without reservation), we are going to do whatever we can to give our community the best that we have, and that is

going to be a mighty good example of what a properly organized and maintained amateur opera company ought to be, must be, in fact, if it is to meet with any fair measure of that success which we have set out to win for ourselves.

And now we shall proceed to build up our organization, using every care, and taking each step with due precaution, because, and quite naturally, we do not want troubles for our pains. So that right here at the outset it will pay us mighty rich dividends to keep several matters right in the forefront of our minds.

The very first of these is an axiom of physics which has it that, other things being equal, (adaptability, efficiency, etc.), the less numerous the parts of a machine, the more perfect is that machine. And another axiom which it will pay us very well to remember is this—taken from an altogether different source, yet fully as worthy of very careful storing where we can get to it at greatest convenience, as any Booster will most heartily assure you; other things being equal, (judgment, sincerity, etc.), the greater the number, the more certain the success.

Here we find an apparent contradiction. But, being pretty good at solving little mysteries such as this, we proceed to elucidate our problem about as follows: We shall have a minimum of officers, and a maximum of membership, and yet we shall, insofar as we are able, give to each and every one of our members some post which will prove his or her importance to our organization, thereby holding his or her loyalty to us as little else would, as well as winning from him or her such effort and support as nothing else could.

Let us see: We shall need a president, one or two vice-presidents, (two, if possible), two secretaries, a treasurer, and a librarian. Also, we shall want an Advisory Board, to consist of all the foregoing, added to whom we shall want the conductor of our orchestra, the conductor of our chorus, the director of our ballet, and the stage director. Then we shall require a Board of Directors, which shall include all those before mentioned, together with such others of our

organization as our membership warrants. And at the same time we must try to carry in our minds this terrifying thought—that all of these must be selected with due regard for attendance at rehearsals!

Our president is, of course, our manager, and our vice-presidents are his assistants. Our recording secretary will blossom forth as our press representative, while our corresponding secretary attends to our ever-growing and always more interesting correspondence. Our treasurer will assume the duties of business manager. And our librarian will be of general utility—except to the press representative, who, because of his peculiar work, (shall we say, because of his peculiar work as well as to merit his proper reward?), shall be required to work all alone. What! —do you call this too great responsibility? Well, responsibility is only a part of the price which a good press representative must be expected to pay for his position of glory!

If you have discovered my book, entitled, "How to Organize the Amateur Band and Orchestra," you will have found the duties of the various officers there outlined. I propose, however, to treat that matter once again, because the management of a band or orchestra must differ more or less from the management of an operatic company.

Our manager, then, need not be a singer, neither has he need of profound musical knowledge: but he must be an interested student: he must know a singer when he hears one—and while he may be expected to listen to the words of his conductor, (for of course his conductor will need to be a musician of real parts), he will not heed these words altogether, if he is the manager for whom we are seeking, the only sort of manager worthy to be at the head of our organization! Yes, he will listen, even listen very carefully, to the words of his conductor; but the final judgment must be his in every instance and in very truth! Otherwise note signs of speedy disintegration, look for symptoms of speedy decay: and stop the gap if, when, and as best we can before the whole structure which we have built up so carefully

begins to collapse, and comes crashing down upon our much-to-be-pitied heads! Also, our manager must be an organizer: he should be a reader of men, (and women—but where shall you find this manager? Perhaps among the women of our community—the head of some one of our Women's Clubs —at least the idea might be worth trying—perhaps with, say, one of the assistant managers!); and of all things he must be a diplomatic person, a person of poise and popularity! Yes! Look for such a person if you expect to successfully hold the hope of not having to look very squarely at Trouble! Trouble very real, very pressing, and altogether most discouraging!

From the foregoing you will have gathered that our manager must possess a number of certain qualities not only very desirable to see in any other man, but which we have every right to demand as well as to find possessed by our choice for manager. And, of course, we must seek quite the same sort of persons, (although these may very well be of different and even varying types), for his assistants, upon whom he may have to depend upon a single moment's notice, either because of indisposition, a sudden up-cropping of untoward events, or any one of those numerous conditions or circumstances which may and very often do confront the members of the human family! And he has the right to look for as well as to expect competent support—although only Heaven can help him if he leans too heavily upon it! He may seem to court criticism as one whose judgment has proved weaker than was supposed: he may actually be criticised for one thing or another; but if we will use this critical energy of ours to somewhat better, more loyal support, (say, for example, in developing our own greater skill, or even the sale of an additional ticket or two for our forthcoming performance,—my goodness!, how far ahead I have jumped in just one little jump!), what a vastly different result we may be able to achieve after all! In other words, let us choose our manager and his assistants with the very utmost caution, and then let us use every precaution to keep him as well as

those most desirable others, like him, with our organization through many, many most prosperous as well as progressive years.

Now, lest my position be very greatly misunderstood, let it be recognized, and at once, that it is my opinion that the right sort of woman might qualify for either, any, or all of the posts which we have to offer, insofar as, and where ever these posts have to do either with the administration or "putting over" of our organization. As a matter of fact, I hold very strongly to the belief that, in some instance, the word and the way of a woman might carry even farther than that of a man. So that while I shall continue to talk about a "he" it may very well be a "she" who undertakes and actually puts over some of the greatest of the successes which our organization shall have the great good fortune to accumulate.

Our secretaries now demand our attention. These need not be musicians nor singers; but it will be well for us if they know what good music is even if it be impossible for them to perform it. That one who is to be our press representative, will win for us many a hearing if his word and work are known to be backed by Knowledge as well as by Enthusiasm and Conviction. And that other will put into his work a finer touch, a more nearly winning touch, if Knowledge backs Confidence! However, a little knowledge is a very dangerous thing to deal with; which is just another if not a gentler way of explaining that if one's musical education has been, for some reason neglected, there may be no good reason why it should so remain.

Our treasurer will assume the business management of our organization, as, indeed, he should be very glad to do, since this will keep the financial end of our enterprise just where it ought to be, and keep such matters altogether free from unnecessary confusion: from such confusion as would most probably arise if this particular sort of work were to be divided. Musical knowledge will, of course, not hurt him. But his position is the one which, of all the others, will not be harmed in the slightest degree should he fail to possess

it As a matter of fact that much-heralded but altogether erroneous conception that an artist can never have a business head may help him in certain quarters. However, if it be true that two heads are better than one—why a business head coupled to a musical one should do the trick for that treasurer of our organization—if, indeed, the treasurer of our organization should be in such need as to require any sort of trick with which to make good for us.

The librarian will, of course, need to possess a good knowledge of his work, and that includes music, since he will be in very close touch both with singers as well as with orchestral players. That silly idea that a singer need know only how to use his voice, and positively next to nothing about musical Theory, Harmony, History, and either the piano or organ, has very nearly passed from among us; it surely is a great joy to announce this! Artists know, and if you are in a position where you should know and yet do not know—why they will not be any too slow to let you know that they know just exactly how much you should know but do not know! And why should you, our librarian, in whom we put sufficient trust to make you OUR librarian—why should you, of all persons, put yourself and your organization, (which, by-the-way is OURS, always remember that, please!), in a position which could be altogether altered by so small an effort on your part? But of course our librarian will be as competent in this direction as he is in those others which help to make up his work. As a matter of fact it is just these combinations which make him the right person for this particular position, which, after all, was just exactly why we chose him, of all our members, to fill it.

Our conductors, choral as well as orchestral, will be musicians, of course,—organists, most probably of our town's religious organizations. They will know what voices are: they will know what a balanced operatic orchestra is: they will know—well, they will either know their business or, very soon, everybody else will know that they do not know their business! And the difference between knowing and not knowing will prove to be the difference between artistic success and inartistic failure!

But, hold on! There is another side to this angle! And that side is the stage director! We must watch our step very carefully, here! The orchestra may be fine and the voices may be fine: but if the stage work is not just as fine, the audience will know it and they will let you know all about it! Be it known that while musical knowledge is not absolutely required here, it comes dangerously close to being one of the essential qualities which should be looked for in the person who has charge of this work for our organization. After all is said, there can be no doubt that with good orchestral, choral and stage directors to back him up, our manager will lead us far along our road to success. But our stage director must be carefully chosen. He must have a good grasp of those traditions which have come down to us, and he must have that sound judgment which may, with reasonable safety, be depended upon to guide him in his work. He should have not merely a working knowledge of things pertaining to theatrical matters, but, in addition, he must have a deep appreciation for, as well as a real understanding of, dramatics. A good sense of music will, of course, greatly add to his value so far as we are concerned: and, more especially, he must have an accurate knowledge of times and manners, conditions and materials. For he must never be guilty of anything that might smack of, or even distantly approach, an anachronism. That would most certainly smash our very best efforts! That would put our organization out of business even more certainly than a little bad acting or a little bad singing! Yes, indeed, that will do our organization even more harm than would a little bad acting and a little bad singing even when coupled up to a little bad playing by the orchestra! Which, of course, will be watched for and most carefully corrected at our rehearsals, which, of course, will he held very frequently, and be conducted with every care! Because the only accidents which we can permit to happen upon our stage are those "accidents," (please note how that word is enclosed in quotation marks!), which have been so carefully planned by, and deliberately schemed for, by the composer of the composition which we

have set ourselves to present for the edification of our audience, and which must be judiciously, (and more often than not, exactly), interpreted as well as artistically delivered, if we are to merit favorable criticism which is just, and escape from those "I-told-you-sos," whose chief delight appears to be finding fault with all such as attempt the doing of anything with which they are either unable, unwilling, or perhaps even quite incapable of helping to put over!

From all of which you will sooner or later come to see that our stage director must learn to observe from both sides of the footlights! He must know just exactly what his people are to do upon the stage, and he must know that they have done just precisely that: and what is more, so far as he is able, he must give the audience every opportunity to fully observe and understand just what those on the stage are saying, (singing), and doing, which, as you can very readily realize, is neither always nor even often, a simple matter, but altogether a far from easy task.

"Great Scot!", I can hear some of you saying, "where are amateurs to find such a wonderful person so marvelously endowed?"

Well, suppose you look about you? More likely than not there is an amateur dramatic society in our town, and, perhaps, even a good one! Why not link up with such an organization, either wholly, or to such extent as we are able? It is not only very possible, but it is even very probable, that we may find some mighty valuable material within the membership of such an organization, and it is extremely likely that such an organization would not only very heartily welcome our support, but would be quite willing to give us at least as much and as loyal support as we were ready to give. Why not test out this idea?

And here is another. If there should happen to be an amateur orchestra in our town, why not link up with that, also? It would save us much valuable time in training a body of capable musicians. It would enable us to concentrate our efforts on the up-building of that which we have set our-

selves to do. And if, in addition, we could find in our town an organized choral society—then we should be in very rare good luck!

The director of our ballet is likely to be our town's foremost teacher of the dance. He, too, must have some knowledge other than just fancy-dancing. He must know costumes of the various periods: he should know what has been done on the operatic stage so far as the ballet is concerned. If, in addition to all this, he should chance to be musically cultured, why then our local composer will find himself very fortunate indeed—because with just a little of the right sort of co-operation, our organization may be in a position to bring out something new in the way of a ballet.

I am now about to give you a thought on which to ponder. An orchestra has always been used for operatic purposes—but operatic orchestras have not only changed, but have grown in every direction—until now we have an orchestra the like of which the originators of matters operatic never dreamed. If you happen to have a copy of that book of mine entitled, "How to Organize the Amateur Band and Orchestra," it may help you to see what a modern symphonic orchestra is like. And from this you may note what an operatic orchestra is, or ought to be. Even so—from time to time operas are given in the open air, where the orchestra is found to be always weak, where those occupying the rear of enclosure or stadium have difficulty in receiving much of the musical picture. Well, now—could we function, even occasionally, as an out-of-doors operatic company? And if we could,—should we? Should we make such an experiment? Might it not prove interesting?

These and other matters would have to be decided by the officers of our organization. Our officers, too, would have to work out such constitution and by-laws which should regulate our organization and safeguard it from those rocks which are likely enough to be found in our path. They will do well to win the support of the whole membership by permitting each and every one to have at least one finger in the pie! Put them on committees! Put them on committees

that actually and honestly function! Let them talk—under not too obvious guidance! Stimulate interest through stimulated activity—and the best way to do that is to stimulate activity through stimulated interest! And about the very best way to do that is to keep the interest alive by giving the interested something to do! Put it how you will, turn it how you may, you will finally come to the conclusion that to do is to be as well as remain interested in the doing! And we must be continually interested in what our organization is doing—or we will find, all too soon, that our organization will be incapable of doing anything—in other words, it will have disintegrated, gone to pieces, died! That is something which our officers must not, dare not, permit! To grow we must do, and unless we grow larger and more efficient, we shall stagnate and fall apart—so, officers of our organization, set each of us something of interest to do; let one committee find where we may meet and rehearse, (the vestry-rooms of a church may be found available, or some hall, perhaps,—even some private home—but it must be a meeting-place that is reasonably permanent,—mark that!): set another committee to increase our membership: keep us going and we will keep ourselves growing—yes, and to keep us growing be certain to show us that we are going along the road that we have set ourselves! This will prove to our officers that they have some fine organization—and, meantime, it will do a whole lot to show our organization that it has one mighty fine set of officers! This combination will surely win! There may be another—but I do not know it!

CHAPTER III.

Our Officers and Their Duties

IN THE last chapter we discussed some of the qualities for which we should seek in all such as might be deemed eligible as the heads of our organization. We must use every judgment in our selection of those who shall lead and govern us, because upon them, and quite naturally too, must rest the largest part of our destiny as an organized body. Upon us will rest no small portion of the success or failure of our undertaking—but that, of course, each and every one of us realizes quite fully. Therefore, before proceeding any further with our consideration of the subject now before us, we pledge our fullest loyalty not only to our organization but to its officers as well—whoever they may chance to be, once selected and then elected, they shall both merit and feel our guaranteed support. And this they will need, you may believe me! According to an ancient and well-worn saying, "Uneasy rests the head that wears the crown,"—and this is doubly the case as concerns the managerial head: for not only does his head rest uneasy, but his crown never quite seems to have been fitted with any too special care! Therefore, if it be possible, show the heads of your organization just a little extra kindliness. Be a little less critical and a lot more helpful. Take it as a matter of course that they mean well by you, individually, and by the organization as a whole. Let it be remembered that their success means our success, and that includes yours as well as mine. Let us, right here at the outset, free ourselves of every known form of pettiness—and should we discover some form that has not yet been discovered, let us label that form and bury it deeply with the others! We want no selfishness: we can brook no jealousies: we will not countenance even the smallest and most harmless of vanities—we have

Scene from "Cyrano," Act III, by Walter Damrosch

room only for EFFORT, the greatest EFFORT of which we are capable—backed by the most loyal support which it is within our power to give!

Well, then, our manager will supervise everything that goes on insofar as our organization is concerned. He it is who must either form our orchestra, or link up with one that may already exist in our town. He it is who must either organize our chorus, or else get into closest communication with one already existing. He it is who must choose such works as we are to perform as well as when and where we are to perform them, and, (and please mark this most carefully!—for this is one of the rocks upon which many an organization has gone down to its wreck!), he it is who shall finally declare who shall perform in them—and none shall dare to tell him that his judgment is poor, or that so-and-so would have proved a far more sensible choice. You see, the responsibility will be his whether we succeed or not—and in the event that we should not succeed to the extent for which some of us have hoped, you may with every safety depend upon this one thing: he, and he alone, will be made to carry every whit of the responsibility—what though some of us may have shirked—however slightly!

Of course, what has been stated here will hold for a large part as concerns his immediate associates. His assistants must share with him all the blame—or at least such part of it as they can be induced to bear: as for the credit—why, credit, whenever there is anything like credit in our neighborhood, (and that may not come to us for quite a long time, and then only at most infrequent intervals), well, just see how much of that he, himself, will get! His the blame—every iota of it—that's the game.

Wherefore, as already pointed out, those who lead us must be very strong and of unusually great courage! Our manager and his assistants must have very watchful eyes and they must have very "long" ears: in addition they must possess very keen minds and very stern hearts: more than that, they must carry with them, and have working in utmost

perfect condition, a thoroughly active, and always dependable brain! You may call it anything you please—"nerve"—, if you like that better! They must not merely know how to listen—although that, in itself, is a mark of what we have the right to expect, even if it takes time. And so, when we have assembled at the manager's call, let us always be on time—even though he may be almost always a little late! Of course he should not be late—but we must allow our manager at least some sort of compensation. And having allowed him that—ten to one he will be waiting there for us!

Of course all the heads of our organization will do well to keep out of our performances—and this, regardless of every temptation! Because if one is to shine at all, he must very carefully avoid trying to shine on both sides of the footlights! More especially at one and the same time!

Now let us take a survey,—just a rough, bird's-eye view, so to say, as to a few of the conditions under which he may have to work, and let us, insofar as we may, try to visualize some of the situations which may confront him.

Our manager must have an "office" wherein to do his work—in his home, perhaps. There he must meet, as frequently as may be, and at hours that have been especially set aside for that purpose and which must never, under any circumstances be changed—or look out for Confusion, that herald of Disaster!,—with his assistant managers, to whom he has delegated some portion of his work. With these, perhaps, he will have summoned our secretaries, as well as our treasurer, and, also, our librarian. We will now proceed to eliminate as many as we can, and so we begin with the librarian, who, having reported upon the condition of the musical and other off-stage material necessary for the performance of the opera which has been chosen for performance, or else made crystal clear exactly what is lacking and still is needed for a proper rehearsal of such work, may be excused, and departs. Follows, then, our treasurer, who explains how our financial balance now stands; the amounts we owe, and to whom these are due: the amounts due to us—and from whom. He may explain the progress made in the sale

of space in our program: he may point out the necessity of curtailing some certain expense: It is his duty, here and now to talk very plainly—though with due courtesy! And having said his say, whether he gains his point or is overruled, he may remain, if so he be requested or required, or he too, may now leave our circle—for the moment. Now that secretary who is also our press representative, may step forward and deliver his report: he may tell of the "space" he has won for us from his arch-enemy, the editor of our local paper—more often than not a true and loyal friend, once convinced of the honesty of our enterprise and the motives behind it,—but that, as a rule, will not be required, since the manager will have seen all that has appeared concerning our organization, at least so far as our local paper is concerned. At any rate he will render his full and complete report, and then, having brought all matters with which he has had to do, either as, say, recording secretary, (reports of our last meeting, etc.), and everything else that he has which in any way concerns us—he may withdraw or remain, as necessities require. Then steps forward our stage-director, who reports as to his department; whether or not the scenery which has arrived is as has been ordered; whether or not he, and his assistant, the property man, (more about him in the proper place), are satisfied with the properties which have been provided; whether his assistant, the electrician, or that other assistant, the stage-carpenter, can do this or accomplish that; whether this or that is to be changed, on the stage—and how,—these and all other matters pertaining to his department our stage-director must make known. After which our chorus-director may have his say, whatever that may be. Then follows our orchestral director and his report. After which, our Triumvirate will confer, consult, and finally decide! Of course you may turn this about any way you please. The result will be precisely the same—which is to say, the manager and his assistant managers must find themselves in complete touch, not only with their assistants, but with the conditions which confront these assistants and with which they

are contending—and from the manager they must receive such aid, advice, or judgment as it may be within his power to give them. For instance, our treasurer may report a falling-off of subscriptions for our performances, or some unusual difficulty arising in the sale of space in our program —bear with me for a moment and note that to pay our bills we must have that with which bills are normally met—money! And money comes to an organization in many, many ways! Perhaps our good manager will know of still another way—he will,—if he is any good as a manager! Or at least he should!

And so it goes, around and around! For the orchestral director can not make a competent report unless and until he is in closest touch with the members of his orchestra. Nor can our chorus-director render an accurate opinion as to where he stands with his work, unless and until he knows. And the stage-director must do the same with his assistants —that is to say, win and keep the confidence of all those with whom he has to work—for, be it known to us now and remembered by us as frequently as may be,—ours is a chain that is never any stronger than its weakest link: so that we will do well to watch that our chain remains very strong and always unimpaired. Squabbling will impair that chain: petty prejudices will come mighty close to breaking it: silly animosities, little disagreements that are allowed to grow into larger misunderstandings, rivalries and vanities—these have never helped to make any organization either more permanent or more successful. Let us avoid all such in our work: let us have thought as well as room only for our work!

And again, let us consider such another meeting where our manager and his assistants are joined by the director of our ballet, who may be fighting hard for some additional means wherewith to obtain those costumes for which he may believe his department to be in need—or for any other reason only known to him, but to him known only too well!,—that director of ballet of ours! Meantime our worthy treasurer is ever on the watch that our resources must not be too nearly drained, nor too greatly strained! And our manager and

his assistants must be on hand with the assuring word, the enlightening idea, the decision which must be accepted by all both as final as well as acceptable.

Thus, the treasurer heads two departments, and, thereby, becomes the director of two committees. The one has to care for those subscriptions which shall enable us to secure our drill-ground for orchestra, chorus, ballet: in other words he must provide us with those resources which shall enable us to properly rehearse such works as we have set ourselves to perform. And, also, he must sell such space in our program, as well as such tickets for our forthcoming performances as shall assure the financial success of our enterprise. It will be our care to furnish the artistic success.

The recording and corresponding secretaries will, of course, attend to their particular angles of the organization, and, in addition, they will do all that they can to co-operate with those with whom they are fitted to work—once their own work has been properly cared for. As our press-representative, there will be stories to write about our organization—good stories about what we aim to do, what we aim to accomplish, as well as what we are doing right now,—there should be plenty of these, and there will be if our press-representative knows anything at all about his business,—which is not so much concerned with "fine writin'" as it is with facts, more facts, all of the facts! Once let an editor know that our purpose is high and our ambition keen, and these stories will be properly featured: once let him discover that what you have written is not so, and you will be worse than of no use at all to us as the publicity person of our organization! And much of our organization's life will depend upon that sort of publicity that our publicity director obtains for us. If of the right sort, it will undoubtedly help us to grow, and this will most certainly help us to make all that we undertake "go"—and that, largely! For we need the interest of the general public to succeed, and we should try as best we can to richly deserve that interest—and once we have won it, then begins a never-ending fight to keep it! Imitators will try to steal our thunder: our own successes

should be sufficient to make such efforts impossible. We must win through merit and we must continue to win through merit—and it is the duty of our publicity director to see that the public knows all about us, about the difficulties that we have overcome, about how hard we have been working to do the right thing in just the right way—and all without gush or gusto! Which will be hard,—no doubt about that! And yet that must be done if the goal for which we are striving is to be won!

Our librarian will be responsible for scores and parts, for orchestra as well as for chorus. He must keep these in thorough and constant repair: he must report losses as early as possible, and if he be wise, he will anticipate such losses by having a few extra parts where he can get to them just before they are needed—which is to say that he will never be caught napping—as, indeed, he must never be caught otherwise than fully equipped and thoroughly prepared! Of course he may have helpers—but it will be safest for him to do his own work, so that he may know that it has been done properly. He must distribute as well as collect such material as the manager shall direct: he should receive receipts therefor from the heads to whom this has been given: he must be careful of this material, because it will have cost us real United States dollars—and too many of these we are not any too likely to have! It is purely a mechanical thing to copy: when a part looks worn, he should make a copy or two of such part—the worn part may then be replaced—there is nothing of musical knowledge required here. It is just learning how to write a good, clear, clean note—which is by no means half as difficult as it looks!

Ballet, chorus, orchestral and stage directors each have mighty important duties to perform. Should one "shine" here, and another fail to properly function there, you can make mighty safe bets on a more or less unbalanced performance! Which, of course, will do us no good! For ours must be an altogether co-operative victory!

The director of the ballet will, in all likelihood, be our local teacher of dancing—but, be it recognized right here and right now, that he must be considerably more than just a teacher of dancing, even of so-called "fancy" dancing. He must not only be able to imitate: he must not alone know how to interpret: in addition, he must be a creator, or at the very least, an innovator! Unless he knows his business we would be much better off without him than with him, because with him we should have a badly performing ballet, which is far worse than none at all! We must either shine here, or risk going altogether without this embellishment of our performance!

There are very few operas without chorus—so that, as may very easily be seen, our chorus-director becomes at once a most important functionary! He must select the voices which he is to drill. And he must drill and drill and drill! And when everybody believes that his chorus is letter-perfect, —then he must drill some more to be certain and sure! After which, if he is any good at all as a director of chorus, he will drill them some more, just to keep them well-drilled! And a chorus, to be any good, must be a mighty well-drilled chorus—and since we cannot perform our opera without a chorus,—and since a poorly-drilled chorus will help us to acquire some mighty caustic criticism,—only that, and altogether too much of that—which is something we would be far better off without,—why, we must see to it that our chorus is the very best with which we can provide ourselves. Which is why I have suggested that we link up with an already trained and competently organized chorus, if such be found possible, in that town of ours. And, too, this will spare us much effort, which we might use to our advantage in other directions within the field of our endeavor.

And now for a few words as to our orchestral director. He must work in very close co-operation with the director of our ballet, (with whom he will work out such dances as are to be performed), as well as with the director of our chorus, (whose singing will, to a more or less considerable degree, depend upon the work of his players), as well as

with the stage director, (with whom he must consider most carefully everything which is to take place on the other side of the footlights). Of course we shall have to give all these matters more space at another time and place: just here I should like to point out that we must provide ourselves with a properly trained orchestral body—which, if to be found in our town as an already functioning body, will lessen our trials very considerably.

We now come to the work of our stage director, who must have full charge of all that space which has been concealed from the audience so long as the curtain has remained lowered. He must supervise the setting of all scenery: he must know the correct lighting-effects: he must have accurate lists of casts, costumes, cues, entrances, exits, cuts, positions, situations—in fact, he is a practical czar on the stage—subject only to correction by the manager and his assistant managers, whose word, of course, is the law of our company, either on or off the stage—insofar as our organization is concerned Unnecessary delays, or delays that are too long-protracted, shortcomings due to poor stage-management, anything and everything that can possibly mar our performance in even the slightest degree, except the same can be clearly traceable to the head of some other department, must and will finally be placed at his door. The property-man must have no opportunity to make any slips: the electrician and the carpenter and their aids must have no chance to misunderstand or misinterpret his instructions—in other words, and in very truth, nothing must go wrong! From the raising of the curtain to the lowering of the same, all that the audience sees or hears will be held by them, as well as by us, to have been so seen and heard at his own direction! And so throughout each act which goes to make up a performance. And so throughout all the performances which help to make up our season!

But the duties of our officers dare not end here! Theirs is the work of committee-making. They must know who shall do this, and who shall attend to that. There must be a membership-committee, of course: this shall pass on the

general eligibility of the persons who may want to join us —and the work of such a committee must be based on the broadest lines of fair-play to all. And then there must be a ballet-committee, a chorus-committee, an orchestral-committee. Also, there must be a committee on Constitution and By-Laws, for, of course, we must have rules and regulations for our guidance. Here it might be well to point out that less serious infractions of such rules and regulations might help lessen our deficit at the end of the year—although each of us should try to help in the prevention of that—hopefully by some other means! Just the same, if we must be late, now and then, or if we must do something which calls for a small fine in the way of penalty—well, we might not feel so badly, no, nor fare so badly, either, if we knew that inefficiency on our part helped to contribute to the efficiency of our organization. And there must be committees on subscription and program—as well as all those usual committees which help to govern an organization, generally, even including a nominating committee. But, of course, all this will come in due time. Our first efforts must of course be to get together and form that organization for which all these committees shall function—let us hope agreeably and smoothly—so that, even at our best, we shall be only reflecting the harmony which is ours as an organization.

CHAPTER IV.

Our Chorus

GIVE me two pianos, with two competent performers at each of these instruments, and with them it will be possible to cover an orchestral score. Add to these an organ and a competent organist, and it at once becomes possible to imitate some of the orchestral instruments,—notably the woodwind,—the piccolo, flute, oboe, English horn, the clarinets, and the bassoons. But the voice-parts only human voices can give us,—and as for the chorus, why that can only be rendered by a chorus.

Now here we are not going to tell only of the chorus; we are going to explain not only what it is, but, also, what it does and, too, something about how it does its part. First, then, let it be remembered that it forms the background from which, later on, our "stars" may emerge. Although right here I would like to express the hope that we shall come to value star-parts less, and the work as a whole, that is to say, the ensemble, more.

The chorus is divided into certain very definite divisions,—first very broadly—that is to say female voices and male voices, and then again into those important categories into which these voices are naturally broken up. For instance, there are sopranos, mezzo-sopranos, contraltos, for the female section: the sopranos being the highest register and the contraltos the deepest: it is also well to explain that there are lyric and dramatic sopranos—but while this is well to understand and recall, it will not too greatly concern us at this time. The male section of our chorus will be found to consist of tenors, baritones and basses,—the tenors being the highest and the basses being the deepest. In passing we might note that there are lyric and dramatic tenors, tenor and basso-baritones, basso-buffos and basso-profundos,—and having noted these, we proceed.

Scene from "Cleopatra's Night," by Henry Hadley

Our chorus-committee will, first of all, test your voice —if you are to join us in our active performance. You will then, if acceptable, be assigned to that section into which your voice will bring you. With this section you will be drilled until you know the work in hand: then you will meet the other sections, and will then, for the first time, perhaps, realize the true joys that can be derived from this sort of work. Having assembled in some proper meeting-place, our chorus-director will explain the nature of the composition which is before us: he will even play the composition, especially if it is new to most of us, and he will point out some of the very obvious matters contained therein, leaving the more intricate for later explanation and elaboration. Then, to each of us will be given a part, and we may be asked to see what we can do with it—from which we shall at once gather a most important lesson. To be in a chorus you must have more than a mere passing acquaintance with sight-reading. So that, if you would do well in a chorus, (or anywhere else where real musicianship is concerned), you should set about making yourself proficient in this matter of sight-reading, if you are not so, already.

Especially is this true when you recall that the chorus may perform, (and very often does), without any sort of solo-work at all. And the chorus may be used for other purposes than purely those of the operatic performance, where it of course holds the centre of the stage as the merry villagers, the men-at-arms and their ladies, the mob,—even to impersonating anything and everything from normally good church-going folk, to a perfectly riotous horde—but mark this!—always most carefully drilled whatever its part may be to render. For the chorus may be used in cantata and oratorio—and, of course, is so used. So that we learn from the foregoing still another very important lesson—which is that with our chorus, we possess quite a number of strings to our musical bow—which is one very good reason why we should choose our chorus with very great care, so that ours may be a very good musical bow!

The chorus-director, will, therefore, make each of us as nearly perfect in our own renderings of the work which has been set before us, as it is possible for him to make us, before permitting us to join in the work as a whole. And then neither he nor we must be too greatly disappointed if the matter fails to move along quite as smoothly as we might have supposed that it would—after all the training through which we have passed! Just a little flaw will spoil the whole effect for which we have been striving. And yet this flaw could have appeared only when we were assembled as a full functioning body. Well, then—what then? Why—work, and more work! Drill and more drill—until each and every flaw has been worked out of our performance, and we stand ready to go upon the stage, there to work with the performers who have been cast for the roles of the opera. And after that? Why, then we start our work with the performers and the orchestra—these are our final rehearsals! Here we put the final touches to the work which we have already done. And it might be as well to point out here that we must expect to be "touched up"—as it were, again and again, right up to the very last rehearsal! And after that, too,—mostly by those who could not have done nearly as well as we have done!

That is the work of the chorus—and that is how the chorus does its work! It is a long and slow process, and we progress by winding around the pole of imperfection in a more or less successful attempt to find our goal—which is the pole of perfection—which we never reach—quite! Nor does anyone, anywhere! But at least we have braved the storms which always confront those who are brave enough to attempt—and this should mean much to us—notwithstanding, and even in spite of, the criticism of the thoughtless. I say "criticism," but I do not really mean "criticism" —for that is helpful and encouraging because it shows us just exactly our shortcomings—and knowing these, we are prepared to attempt some sort of remedy for them. The sort of cheap and silly "criticism" to which we are likely to be treated is the sort which knows not—or it would know more

than to simply cut and wound, without being able to point out and bind up! However, we shall bear with that, armed as we shall be with the knowledge that we have done our part as well as we were able—and who is there who could have done more?

And our chorus, with or without principals, with or without principals and orchestra, can help to open up an almost untrod field for our struggling American composers —think of that! Alone, or aided by the orchestra, or helped by both orchestra and principals, our chorus may take no small part in building up our American art!

The pleasures to be derived from choral work are many, in any case. But, when to these is added the privilege of building a strong national art which shall give to American creators and American interpretors their avenues of self-expression,—then the up-building of such choral organizations becomes an actual duty,—and the successful accomplishment of such an enterprise grows into a very necessary end for which, as Americans, we should never cease to strive!

CHAPTER V.

Our Ballet

THOSE who come to our organization with the intention of joining our ballet section, will do well to leave all thought of dancing, as generally understood by young men and women of today, behind them. They will have little if any use for such "steps" as they have managed to acquire. For this is altogether a different matter —this ballet! True—it has to do with dancing—but with what a different sort of dancing it has to do!

The ballet, properly speaking, and as it is modernly employed, is a portrayal of action through dancing. It is a series of pictures which has been set to music which itself is pictorial in nature—so that the series may have an even heightened effect when performed upon the stage. It is, if you wish to put it that way, practically a sign-language, which, of course in its original form, long antedated every form of speech. In fact, one may study it as a pantomime —such as that wonderfully fine example, the work entitled, "Coppelia," written by Messrs. Charles Nuitter and A. Saint-Leon, for which Leo Delibes composed the musical setting.

Our ballet-director will search for real talent as well as honest grace—which, when discovered, he will take to his heart and create into a treasure of such great and tremendous value that its very possession must be even more carefully safeguarded than are Brother John's football signals! Seriously—here may be a treasure for us, indeed. For with a true interpreter of the dance our organization will have acquired still another means of real usefulness to our community.

You will have, of course, come to the conclusion that, together with our orchestra, our ballet may give its own special performances,—and that is true: it may function without either solo-voice or chorus. But that is a long step

in a direction about which, at this particular moment, we perhaps dare too greatly even though we only permit ourselves to dream. For we have need of every one of our moments! We must build and we must build without needless loss of time! Only so shall we be able to keep this organization of ours together—and without an organization,—we simply can not proceed to act!

Dancing, as we may readily believe, is one of mankind's oldest forms and methods of expression. Primitive man as well as modern man, danced. Even today we may still find traces of religious ceremonies which include the dance as a portion of such rites—our Bible mentions dancing, "before the Lord." But this sort of dancing, however it may have attempted to give form and expression, and, insofar as action is capable of giving voice, even that, to what its participants intended to show by their acts—surely this was not, and could not have had more than the remotest connection with, the ballet as we now make use of it.

For the ballet was, up to comparatively recent times, exactly what the program usually calls it—"divertissement." It was a filler in, a stop-gap. It made possible a fuller evening's performance. It enabled the composer to run the gamut of his powers, showing his versatility and proving his erudition—it did all of that, and considerably more. It brought to those who saw it a love for grace and beauty of action in and for itself. For the ballet can become a most attractive adjunct to an operatic performance—even become a most attractive performance in and of itself—as before pointed out: but to be that it must be carefully constructed as well as conscientiously trained. What? Do I again speak of drill? Of drill? Why, of drill I dare not cease to speak! It is, perhaps, one of the extraordinary facts which shall here be brought to your attention, that the artist is he who can the most cleverly conceal the fact that all that he does as well as all that he says—as a matter of fact, all that he is on the stage, (and sometimes off the stage as well!), is due to drill, drill, drill!

Our director of the ballet will, therefore, give us little rest—and thereby give us much self-confidence! He will call us very frequently together and he will watch us with the eyes of a hawk! He will not permit us to make even the slightest of mistakes without calling our attention to that, very particularly, making due correction of it, and taking every means of precaution within his power that that error, at least and at any rate, shall not be made by us again!

In those older days of the opera, when the tuneful aria was the thing, where the orchestra really didn't matter, and where the voice, and the voice only, was the chief concern of the audience as well as the chief aim of the whole performance, the ballet entered as a means to the end of stop-gap—as before explained. In those days of loosely-formed operas, with plots which often too closely resemble the plots of our musical comedies with which we have been for so long familiar, this sort of ballet was permissible, even pardonable —and certainly understandable. But those days, mostly, have gone—and the ballet lives and even thrives! And what is even more to the point, it may be used by us to very great advantage.

Note, for instance, that the ballet can perform, aided only by the orchestra. This presents an idea quite new on this side of the Atlantic, an idea brought more clearly to our attention since the arrival of the now famous Ballet Russe.* However others may act in such matters, artists are ever ready to give credit where credit is due! Pavlowa and others have shown us something of what the dance can become. The question now arises, what can we, here in America, do with this form of art?

First of all, of course, we must provide ourselves with the proper means, and then we may be in a position to locate the material which we desire in order to perform such works as we require. We shall find plenty of foreign-made works ready at our disposal. But we should be ready and willing and even anxious to make a further step—the next step! And that is to provide work for our own home-made works, which

* The outgrowth of Isadora Duncan, the originator.

have come to us, let us hope, from our home-developed talent! Our composers may step in, here! And they will all the more gladly respond to our invitation, with so many other doors practically barred to them! I hear you deny that there are any bars against American-composed compositions. I hear you declaim the names of this one and that one—well, and do you know their place of birth. And do you know where they were trained? And why can't you name a few of those born here and trained here whose works you have heard and are ready to hear again?

Follow this plan, then, and let us see where it shall lead us! Organize a ballet that shall do our organization, as a whole, real credit. Perform the parts assigned, even in the older works—which, will help to guide and guard us—and remembering always that ours is an amateur organization, (even though a mighty good organization!), let us be ever on the look-out for the American composer! Let us give him his chance—his chance to hear his own creations performed, his chance to correct and improve,—his chance to polish and perfect. How many of the works of even the very greatest of the foreign masters have failed—even of Verdi and Wagner? And how many works are now no more heard, or very rarely? Don't think that Art springs full-grown and full-blown in one part of the world and doesn't exist at all in this part of the world! Do you know what it means to be "Barnumed"? Well, a great many of us have been good and properly "Barnumed"—"Barnumed" until it has begun to hurt! So here and now let us very firmly resolve that OUR organization is not only going to be a progressive organization, performing as well as we can whatever we set ourselves to perform. Not only that! OUR organization is going to be a most aggressive organization! We shall attempt the impossible—with every chance of surprising, unlimited, success! We shall go hunting for the American composer—and we shall probably find quite a few of "him" —with a "her" every now and then! Who knows? And to the finder shall sometime be paid the reward of a grateful America!

CHAPTER VI.

Our Orchestra

ARTHUR ELSON, in his interesting book, "A History of Opera," gives some details of the "orchestra," as it appeared in the early years of the Seventeenth Century. My readers are referred to this as well as to other works along this line, for it must appear much more than merely obvious that it is impossible for me to quote at length from such works, or even to mention a sufficient number of such works, in the space at my command. In passing, let me urge you, very early in the life of our organization, to gather together a fine collection of books for our musical library. This will prove a fascinating task as well as a pleasant duty. I shall have to name some author and his work, now and again, and it will pay you to have such works where you can get to them quickly as well as often. And, of course, you can best do this by having these books in the library of our organization, where each member can become familiar with them. For, among other things, I want to bring home to you the fact that the orchestra, as used in connection with the opera of today, is not the orchestra as used by operatic composers of yesterday.

Here is an important fact which you must continually bear in mind, for it carries its own answer to the thought, held by altogether too many, that we in America must look to foreign composers for leadership in this field, because such composers have always had at their disposal exceptional aids which we, in this country, can neither acquire nor fully enjoy. All such thoughtless statements may be, and actually are, properly rebutted by every bit of evidence which is to be obtained: we are at no difficulty at all when it comes to the demonstration of the fact, for instance, that the opera orchestra has grown to its present form from forms which, today, we would call most inadequate for the performance

of any operatic work. Carry this thought with you and you will at once perceive that what has been accomplished elsewhere may be all the more readily accomplished here by us: for our resources are far greater than any which could have been massed anywhere else. But that will appear all the more plain as we pass from one phase of our problem to another—for our problem has many different sides and angles.

Hamilton Clarke, in his little book, "Manual of Orchestration," Chapter Two, (page 11), states as follows: "for, whereas, the opera in question will probably be scored for the following instruments:—2 flutes, 1 oboe, 2 clarinets, 1 bassoon, 2 horns, 2 cornets, 1 trombone, (or 2), drums and complete strings, there are very few provincial towns where the principal theatre possesses a band, (please note!), in which all these instruments will be found; indeed, there are very few theatres in London that have them all."

First of all, we do not call a body of men performing either opera or symphony, a "band"; let it be understood that where the stringed instruments are employed, we call such a body an "orchestra": where the strings are not so employed and where the organized body consists of woodwind, brass, and percussion, we call that a "band,"—but those who have read that book of mine having to do with the organization and the maintenance of the amateur band and orchestra will know all this. Here, then, let me explain just what sort of an orchestra we should make every effort to provide for our organization in our efforts to produce opera by amateurs.

We shall want two flutes, (one of which shall play the piccolo part, when needed), first and second clarinets, oboe, English horn, bassoon, (with contra-bassoon, if possible), two French horns, two trumpets, (which have a far richer tone than cornets—although the cornet may be used if desired), one trombone, (two would be better), one set of tympanum, (these are the tuneable kettle-drums), a set of drums, and the strings as follows: six first violins, four second violins, three violas, three 'cellos, and three basses,—add to this one harp and we shall have a very good body

with which to work—if properly trained! Trained?—do you say that that is just a substitute for "drilled"? It is just the same thing and it amounts to just the same thing! For our orchestra will be noisy and not helpful unless it be very well-trained, indeed!

So that it will appear that we shall do our best work with an orchestra as well up in the thirties as possible—forty being better, since it allows the use of four horns instead of two, and adds to our choir of strings. Yes, we can perhaps get along with less—although we shall then have to sacrifice much as to the tone as well as the timbre of our orchestra: with the aid of the piano, we might make some sort of showing with four first violins, two second violins, a viola, a 'cello, a bass, a flute, an oboe, first and second clarinets, a bassoon, 2 French horns, a trombone, 2 trumpets, (or cornets), harp, tympanum and drums. If we are so fortunate as to have command of a portable organ, played by a competent performer, then we can dispense with the services of one of our second violins, and our second clarinet and bassoon. Because with his organ, our organist will be able to fill up the inner parts—and, to a certain degree, at least, imitate the tones of the woodwind which we have here dispensed with—although to one acquainted with the original score, the loss will be perfectly apparent. Still, it can be done,—and rather than give up the performance of an opera altogether, I would rather see it done! And yet I plead for the correct sort of an orchestra—correct in all its parts: it may mean much hard work to assemble such an organization, but hard work, and much of it, is the only sort of effort that will win for us any sort of success.

Here is a thought which, perhaps, might be worked out by our home town in connection with some other home towns, if situated within reasonable nearness. We might, through co-operation, build up chorus, ballet, orchestra! This, of course, will entail even harder work. We shall have to consult time-table and much besides: we shall have to make many sacrifices—but our work should be worth all of these and even more! For there is quite another and a far more

happy side to this proposition than would at first appear. Such a method of organization might open up to us a much wider field of usefulness. Whereas, under other conditions, we might be able to perform some work which we had chosen for presentation, once, or, at most, perhaps twice—under such conditions as we have been considering here, we might be in a position to produce the same work at least once in each of those home towns which had linked themselves up to our organization. And since practice tends to make more perfect, such an arrangement, while possessing and presenting many real obstacles and handicaps, undoubtedly permits of a more frequent production of such works as we have set ourselves for performance. For while it may have been the fashion for everybody in our home town to have taken to the study of the piano—perhaps, in some other home town, quite, if not right, next-door, so to say, we might find that a few had gone over to the strings, or, it may be, to the woodwind or brass; one might make some very interesting experiments along such lines as these.

But, in building up this orchestra of ours, let us always remember, (just as in the examples cited in connection with ballet and chorus), that this orchestra must not be, and, as a matter of fact, is not to be, organized only and solely for work with as well as for an operatic company, important as this sort of work most assuredly is. We should want our orchestra to appear with our chorus, occasionally, and sometimes with our ballet, and, let us hope—very frequently just as an orchestra, with, perhaps, (that is to say, as the opportunity presented itself, and may that be often indeed!), some good amateur as soloist.

And here, once again, we find a wide open field, so far as America is concerned. Here we discover a training-ground for all those who contemplate a career on either the operatic or the concert stages! Here we uncover ways and means not only of discovery of any such in our community, but we offer them the chance for which they have been waiting! Here, also, the American composer may try his wings! Here both soloist as well as composer may sow the seed of

his fame. And our conductor, as well as others of our organization, may first learn to hear, what later they may learn to heed—the call to a fuller and deeper venture into the world of Art.

I have a word, here, for the American composer who has found the door shut on every side. Our orchestra, at its concerts, may perform his songs, symphonies, suites and tone-poems: it may present his choral works or his ballets, and, by the same token, his operas as well! Let us convince the American composer, and this by our acts, that he means much to us, (and, in reality, he means so very much to us that without him and his work our organization loses a very considerable portion of its force for good), and we shall very soon have him with us, and very soon we shall be humming his tunes: and if not, let it not be said that this fault rests with us!

CHAPTER VII.

Our Stage Director's Realm

ALL that portion of the stage which remains concealed from the audience so long as the curtain remains lowered, and which becomes exposed to view so soon as this curtain has been raised, is under the authority of the stage director. Truth to tell, since the whole truth is to be told, even though briefly, his is an even vaster domain, for it extends from just the other side of the stage-door right up to the footlights. Over this domain Sir Stage Director rules with none to question his authority nor yet to say him nay—save only the manager of our organization and his assistant managers!

Heretofore we have discussed the provinces of the director of the ballet, the director of the chorus, and the director of the orchestra, and the work which each has to do in connection with the performance of an opera. In another place we shall outline how this is done. Here, however, we come into things theatrical—matters which are close to the heart of the theatre. And those who, as amateurs or otherwise, have trod upon any stage, will at once recognize the locality and feel very much at home.

The stage director has certain assistants without whose aid he could scarcely hope to carry out his duties. Such are the property-man, the stage-carpenter, the gas-man, (who has degenerated into a mere electrician, these days!), the call boys,—and that Terror of all Stage-Land—He Who Tends The Stage-Door! There are, of course, scene-shifters, curtain-raisers, and such: but with these we shall have not much to do, since they will undoubtedly be professionals and in good standing in some good and substantial Union—while we, well, we, be it known and always remembered, are doing Art for Art's sake and to build up an Art that shall be entirely our own!

Now, of course it at once becomes apparent that the stage director must have absolute control in the setting as well as the clearing of the stage—else we would have no performance such as we know today. Each change of scene, each and every effect that is called for in the score of the opera which we have set ourselves to perform, must be done at his order and under his direction. He, of course, will not only familiarize himself with the requirements of the particular composition that he has before him; but in addition will make certain that the properties which are called for are in the possession of the property-man,—the fan, the books, the desk, the dagger—the thousand-and-one things, large and small, for which the author may have called. He will supervise the work of the carpenter whenever that is necessary, (and it very often is!). He will explain just the sort of lighting which every portion of even the smallest scene requires—so that the electrician may exactly know what is expected of him. He will drill, (you see?—there it is, again!), his scene-shifters so that our organization may perform without those delays for which some other organization may become famous. And he will talk to the stage-doorman just exactly once—and at that time he will talk to the stage-doorman very much to the point. And at that time he will tell him the Rules, which are to last forever—or, at any rate, so long as he is stage director! (Which does not mean that said stage director and said stage-doorman do not speak as they pass by—either within or without the theatre—but only within—because said stage-doorman's locale is just this side of the theatre—and he must not, for any reason whatever, leave his post unguarded.) So that the stage director will have under his charge all those matters which have to do with the proper performance of our work insofar as these have to do with stage-craftsmanship, as well as with those things which are to appear upon the stage. He will have frequent interviews with our manager as to what he is to do and how that is to be done: he will make reports as to what he has and what he lacks, so far as a proper presentation of our work is concerned:

he may, if he be skilled, (but none the less, very guardedly as well as gingerly!), suggest this or that, off the stage—but neither he nor any one else shall do more than merely suggest to the manager,—whose decisions must be regarded as absolutely final in every instance.

With our treasurer Mr. Stage Director will have many a hard-fought battle for the wherewith to purchase those things for which he has need: but he need not waste too much energy here, because most of his material may be hired —and some of it may be acquired, (through contribution, perhaps), or it may be made especially for our organization by one of our members, if so be we number that sort of genius among us! Let it be understood that I am not recommending undue experimentation in the high and mighty art of scene-painting! And yet—who knows? We may come to this—as to many things!

With our director of ballet, he will plan every step of that portion of our performance: with our director of the chorus, he will discuss entrance, exit, position, etc., with our director of the orchestra he will come to an understanding as to "cuts" and "cues," and perhaps some new "business"—who shall say? With each and every person who comes into contact with his stage, Mr. Stage Director will deal—and his word will be the law of his stage, with, as before stated, appeal to our manager and his assistants—who are busy enough as it is—and so will welcome appeals from his decision only very rarely—if at all.

He will not interfere with the casting of the characters for the roles to be portrayed, (but he may well be heard by our manager, who might do well to weigh his words without prejudice), nor will he discuss matters with any of the directors, publicly, although he may do this in private, with much profit to all concerned. He will be an expert on "periods:" he will know "types," costumes, and everything else that can help make his stage-illusions all the more graphic—and so add to the success of our performance. For he will be held absolutely responsible if the moon wobbles and causes the audience to roar! And, also, he it is who will

be held culpable if the book which should have been found on the table was conspicious because of its absence. He will be "kidded" unmercifully, if the curtain rises or falls either too quickly or too slowly—and if, by any chance this should spoil the work of a hitherto good friend and admirer —well, it may not be quite so well! And if his "delays" cause some of the audience to miss their homeward-bound trains—he may have to defend sundry suits-at-law for otherwise needless hotel bills—someone may some day make a test case of this!

All in all, our stage director will have no end of worry —and not too much in the way of glory—because, from the other side of the footlights, it looks so almost incredibly easy! Quite so! "Looks"—is right! And just because it "looks" so easy is just exactly why—it isn't easy—by any manner of means! It is "hard!"—mighty hard!—and it is only the stage director's Art which creates the illusion that it is anything at all like easy! But this is true—and it is something which our stage director might very well take to the innermost secret place in his memory—the smoother his work,— the "easier" it looks to do—the more lastingly will our organization remain in his debt—for he will have shown himself close to an artist.

Property-man, gas-man, carpenter, curtain-raisers, scene-shifters, call-boys, and stage-doorman, will be entirely under his direction and supervision, and each will be held strictly to account for any slips, any mishaps, which may occur—however slight such occurrence may have been. Remember this! Your good work is a thing of the past—your mishap—well, that your friends and neighbors will remember for long—far too long!

Only with the press-representative he will have nothing to do! Every iota of news which he possesses which may help to make our organization's success just a little more assured, or secure, he will give to our manager—who, as our manager, will know exactly what to do with it. But, and Heaven forbid!,—should it be the sort of thing which our

rival, (of the wrong kind!), might be pleased to see in print —that, too, he will at once pass on to his Chief—who will know into whose hands to put the matter.

And, not too occasionally!,—let our stage director cross the footlights! Let him note the effects of his work and determine whether or not these might be bettered: let him listen to adverse comment, (oh, yes!—there'll be that—depend on it!), and study ways and means to beat down the criticism—if said criticism be just. Otherwise—well, let him improve his work, anyway—no matter how good it may be; without a doubt there will be plenty of room for improvement —everybody and anybody will be happy to assure him of that! And what is worse—they may be right!

And so, Sir Stage Director, either be a good stage director,—or else be a traffic-cop,—and just "direct"—'buses.

CHAPTER VIII.

Building Our Company

UP TO this time we have discussed many matters, and from our discussion we have gathered some mighty important facts which should aid us greatly in properly performing the task which we have set ourselves to accomplish—which is nothing less than the building of an amateur opera company. However, it is well for us to recall that, in this company, we shall find the nucleus for what might develop into (a), a choral society, (b), an oratorio society, (c), an organization for the performance of pantomime, or ballet, and, (d), an orchestra which might be used either in connection with all of these as well as with our opera company, and, also, which can function altogether apart from any and all of these, and, appearing alone and by itself, take upon itself the role of a symphonic orchestra.

Therefore we turn, now, to the building of this company of ours, and, while it will be well for us to recall what has been suggested just a moment ago, still, at this time, it may be well for us to think of the matter which is before us under just one single head—our company.

We shall want to dig deeply and so make our foundation strong enough to carry an imposing structure. For of course we want to succeed, and to do that we shall have need of our whole heart in the work before us—we shall have need for our fullest resources, for all our energies, for every iota of talent which it may be our good fortune to discover—and while we keep an open mind, a careful eye, a ready ear, and an outstretched and helping hand for any genius whom we may be so fortunate as to uncover! Ours is a big task—it well may become a gigantic undertaking! Therefore let us proceed with due caution! Let us build with a vision for as well as of the future!

At our first meeting, and, of course at all subsequent meetings, we shall come face to face with numerous problems. John sings—and, also, he plays some orchestral instrument: Jane dances—but, also, she plays. Well, in such cases, what are we to do? Obviously enough, neither John nor Jane can appear on both sides of the footlights at one and the same time! In cases such as the one which holds our consideration at this time, the first thing to know is which one thing is it that makes such a doubly gifted person most valuable to us at any one certain and particular time? Because that is the talent which is, at that precise moment, quite invaluable to our organization: and yet we must not for a moment lose sight of the importance to which that other talent might be put, with the greatest possible advantage to all concerned. And yet, this is but one of the great number of problems which we shall have to solve, from time to time.

Quite early in the life of our organization, we shall do wisely if we form certain very definite committees which are to be entrusted with certain very important matters which most directly concern our life as an organization. We must have, for example, a committee on Voice, a committee on Dance, a committee on Orchestra—and it is to some one of these committees to which prospective members should be directed. Of course, such committees will be under proper guidance; probably the director of each section will become the chairman of the committee which acts for that particular section. Later on, when we shall be prepared to present our organization in performance, there will be, of course, a committee on program—but, strange as it may appear, this committee will be under the chairmanship of no less a person than our treasurer! For its duty will be the selling of advertising "space" in that soon-to-be-issued program of ours! Because it will be the duty of our manager, aided, quite naturally, by his assistants and advisers, to designate what we are to present in the way of performance,—as, also, when and where such performance is to take place, and, also, just who is to take this or that particular role. But more of that at and in the proper place!

First of all, then, we must find places where we can meet. That is to say, if we want to make anything like progress, (and lack of progress will spell very certain, most certain, death to our organization—against which we must always be ever on guard!), we must have very definite meeting-places. Now we can not rehearse more than one section of our company at any one and the same time—that is to say, not for quite some time to come. So that I suggest that we so arrange matters that we may make it convenient for each of our sections to meet at least twice a week. For instance, our orchestra might gather on Monday and Thursday nights —for an hour or so, (as to this, better see my book, "How to Organize the Amateur Band and Orchestra"); Tuesday and Friday nights might be given over to work with the chorus; Wednesday and Saturday nights may become popular in our community as "Ballet Nights." We must meet as often as may be to accomplish what little we may be able to accomplish —always remembering the words of that much-sung ditty, "Every Little Bit Helps." Of course if we should be so fortunate as to find three suitable meeting-places, then each of our sections will be able to meet just so much more frequently,—which will make our progress all the more speedy —and this, in turn, will make our work simpler and our road considerably more easy. And that, of course is very much to be desired.

I shall speak of rehearsals at another time. Here it becomes necessary to explain that, very early in our life as an organized body, each of our sections must function seemingly quite independent each of the others—but this, as a matter of fact, is only seeming,—unless, of course, it be part of a deliberate plan,—as has been elsewhere pointed out— where the orchestra, for example, is to perform by itself as a unit, quite separate and distinct. But even if we are to perform an oratorio or an opera,—for many, many weeks we shall perform entirely apart, one section from the other. Just how we shall set about doing this, remains to be outlined in our next chapter: just here let it be recalled that the chorus is to meet at some definite place, so-and-so many times

each week until it is letter-perfect in its work: which does not mean that you are to practice your scales and exercises at such times! You are to perfect your voice, and to improve your technique, at your home! Here you will go through those passages of the composition which you must master before you can become a part of a performing unit which must be perfect in all its work before our manager dare trust us to perform publicly. Of course the same is just as true as concerns either the orchestra or the ballet—each and every cog in the machine is just as important as is any other cog in our machine! We will do our organization no good at all if we encourage anything resembling "friendly" rivalry—and we may do our organization considerable harm if this sort of foolishness is indulged! Co-operate! That's it—co-operate! We can stand all we can get of that! Work cheerfully—it is cheerful work that makes the performance seem so smooth, so simple! Yes—"seem" is right—for it has been almost anything else but that! However, we shall be none the less pleased because we have worked for our success!

Through our press representative, our manager will have notice given to our local paper that so-and-so many persons are needed for such-and-such a section of our organization: this notice should contain the name of the person to whom to report, as well as time and place where those interested may meet. For instance, our orchestra may need a second cornet, a trombone, or an oboe: then let this need be known—unless it can be filled through private channels. Or it may be that we have enough of all voices except baritones—then let that need be known! None can say just what our need will be. But all will agree that an organization such as ours is mighty badly needed not only in our little community, and not merely within the borders of our State,—but by every community in every State—until throughout the length and breadth of our Country there shall be no community which has not very recently witnessed some performance by some capable American amateur opera company!

Well—of course if you are really interested in THAT—why your work will be mighty nearly play! If not—then it will be work indeed! But, then—this is being written for those who are willing to make work look easy, especially when this work forms the basis for the building of such vehicles as may, in the not too distant future, give our America an art of her own!

Some may call this a dream, and a dream it very well may be! We are not concerned with that. Our only concern is to make that dream come true! And we are bent on doing just exactly that!

CHAPTER IX.

Rehearsing

HERE, once again, we are on theatrical ground, and anyone who has ever trod upon the boards will need no signposts, because he will at once have recognized the locality, sensed the atmosphere, and found himself in surroundings which are at once alluring, inspiring, and congenial.

It is here, then, that we do our work. It is here, too, that our defects are made known to us, made clear as day, remedied in so far as that is possible, removed whenever that can be accomplished; we perfect and perfect until we are as perfect as we can be made to be! Yes—indeed!,—it is here that we work and work and work,—that we drill and drill and drill!,—for, of course, we must be as nearly letter-perfect as possible before we have any right to a public performance of anybody's masterpiece! And it is here, also, that any person of even slight experience, can distinguish the real artist from that one who is not quite so real, but who would like to impress you with the fact that if ever there was a real artist he is most certainly that artist! Because it is not alone what he does that counts: it is, also, and very much, too, how he does what he does, that counts! It is his attitude toward his work, and it is the readiness with which he grasps what is expected of him, that gives any person with experience the most complete index as to his value to our company. What he does on the stage during a public performance is what he has been taught to do, trained to do, drilled to do, at the rehearsal—and that means work, hard work, mighty hard work—ask any real artist and he will tell you that it is the very hardest kind of work! And I very much believe that it is!

Whether it be the chorus, the ballet, or the orchestra, nothing certain can be attempted by us without complete

understanding and complete co-operation; and this we can obtain only by rehearsing. There is nothing that can take the place of the rehearsal. Here we learn each other's mind and learn so to operate and co-operate that many minds will blend into one keen, clear-thinking, quick-acting mind. Rehearse less and you will fail more! Rehearse more and you will fail less! Rehearse enough—and you will not fail at all! And, after all, that is what we have every hope of building—the amateur company that always succeeds! And that means THAT!—which, if it means anything to us at all, (and of course it most certainly does!), why, then, we will meet regularly, as well as frequently, for rehearsal; and we will not only be on time, but we will remain until every iota of our work has been performed, carefully, accurately, and cheerfully.

But, of course, we can not rehearse anywhere and everywhere! We must have a proper and a permanent meeting-place. The ballet may meet, at any rate for some time, at the home of the ballet director. He will have a piano, and it is only fair to assume that he will have the room for such rehearsing. If not, then suitable provision must of course be made. But it is quite a different matter with the orchestra: one can not carry heavy instruments, music-stands, etc., from place to place. Besides, the orchestra must be properly seated if anything like a creditable showing is to be hoped for or expected. The space at my disposal prevents my elaborating the details here, but those sufficiently interested can find the necessary information in my book entitled, "How to Organize the Amateur Band and Orchestra," which please see for matters pertaining to orchestral formation, management, etc. The chorus, too, is likely to prove troublesome unless it is properly and practically cared for—and the first of these cares, once the chorus has been properly organized, will be found to be a suitable "home" where said chorus may properly, which is to say, conveniently, work.

Now, the vestry-rooms of a church, or the assembly-room of a school, or some goodly-sized room in somebody's

large home,—why such a place should be found in any well-regulated community: and of course ours is that! Such a place, will, of course, contain a good piano that is kept carefully in tune! And, equally of course, there will be a sufficient number of chairs, so that the chorus may have proper opportunities for well-earned rests between working periods —because, if our chorus director is the brainy person that he has every right to be, he will know how to split up the work of an evening into parts that are too small to tease and try—and so tempt away from his rehearsals!

With orchestral-rehearsing I shall have nothing to do, here, having covered that matter elsewhere, as before explained. With the work of the ballet I can have little to do, within the small space at my disposal,—since that would require very numerous illustrations, and demand almost a volume for anything like proper explanation. At any rate the director of the ballet will be a person who either understands his work and proves it, or, and just and entirely by his work, proves that he doesn't know much if anything at all about this work of his. There are no two ways about this matter! He is good and so he is our director, or he isn't so good—which is why we have another director! We shall know him by his "fruits"! Very quickly and without the slightest doubt!

But with the director of the chorus I shall have considerable to discuss! For, after all, his chorus can become, and really should become, the foundation upon which our building rests—at least very largely. Because, from out of this chorus may come more than one promising voice: because from out of this chorus may step more than one who shall take a role—even a leading role, in our operatic company: because from out of this chorus may emerge the solo voices of our oratorio organization, (as previously explained),—not at first, of course! But as time passes, and we grow and achieve! For, of course, not wishing to lose very valuable time, we will go afield to seek our solo voices: we will find them in our church-choirs, and we will find them

here and there: but later on, (and our chorus director will be the kind of person who looks a little to what is to be a little later on—if he is the right kind of a choral director,—with which, after all, is the only kind that our company should have anything in the way of dealings), and so, since we are always looking just a little way ahead, our choral director rises in importance—and our chorus comes far toward first place!

Of course it is true that our orchestra may function by itself in concert-form, so that it should be a well-organized as well as carefully equipped and properly trained body: and with this orchestra may appear, from time to time, some one or more of the vocal-soloists of our company, or the chorus as a whole, or some of our vocal-soloists and the chorus, (as, for instance, in oratorio), or the chorus alone: and, too, the ballet may appear with the orchestra in perhaps some pantomimic work; but one can never lose sight of the fact that the work of the chorus, as well as that which may spring from such work, is an ever-present and a thoroughly real responsibility: and that the first place to search for faults if faults there be, will be the rehearsal! You can't get away from the fact that a badly or even carelessly drilled body always shows that it is a body that has been badly or carelessly drilled! And the place where we hold our rehearsals is nothing else and nothing more or less than our drill-ground!

Now, of course, it is expected of a member of a chorus that he or she has a singing voice: also, it is expected of a member of a chorus that he or she can read music at sight with some degree of accuracy: then, too, it is expected of every member of a chorus that he or she bring at least one perfectly good ear to the rehearsal, together with a more or less retentive memory, and, also, as much attention as possible. No—this is not merely humorous; also, it is true! There must be more than just merely the intention to keep the peace; there must be strict discipline, or our chorus will get nowhere! Of course this is equally true as concerns ballet, orchestra, or any other body that is rehearsing, and

whether principals are or are not present, or whether it is the very first rehearsal or the very last! With just this difference, perhaps: that the first rehearsal is usually the noisiest of all rehearsals, while the last, commonly called "the dress-rehearsal," is, in fact, the final dressing-down of the participants in the performance, and is, to all intents and purposes, at least for all those who are then and there engaged, an actual presentation of the whole work,—in fact, an actual performance of it.

Let us assume, then, that we have been called together to attend our first rehearsal of some work which we are going to study for the purpose of publicly performing. No voices are now to be "tried"; you know whether you are a tenor, a baritone, or a basso, a soprano, a mezzo, or a contralto. And while you have doubtless brought along with you no end of temperament, let us hope that you have not neglected to mix the same with a very considerable amount of patience! And while we are facing these little matters, may I suggest to you that, insofar as it is possible, won't you leave every iota of temper and impatience just the other side of the door-step? You see, you will have a great deal to watch for, and considerable to do, and you will be sufficiently "tuckered out" without having anything like a sensible reason for burdening yourself, or perhaps marring your work—and impatience and temper will get you nowhere in rehearsal!

Your voice having been tried, and you having been accepted as a member of our chorus, you will, especially if our chorus be a large one, receive a number, and by this number you will be known. Therefore never change your place unless it be at the direction of the director: and having changed your place, be very certain to exchange your number for that which calls for the place which you now hold. Ordinarily there will be quite enough confusion, especially at the first few rehearsals, (and until we really get down to real and regular work), and you will not willingly want to add to this confusion—not if you really want our chorus to be a good chorus!

At our first rehearsal, the director will have the parts distributed, and, being seated, you will hear the work played, probably on the piano; those portions needing special care, will then be pointed out: you will be told what to do: perhaps, if time permits, you may start working—just enough to sort of whet your appetite—but hardly anything more than that! Then, having been informed as to the next meeting, you will, when at home, proceed to practice and study, so that, at the next rehearsal, having proved that portion of the work well understood, some other portion may be taken—and so, progress made: and so on and on, until our chorus knows its work! And thus far we shall have moved along quite independently of the rest of our company. But these other sections will have been progressing, too, until one fine time we are told that now we are to work with the orchestra, or with the orchestra and the principals, perhaps. You may be the merry villagers, men-at-arms and their ladies, or perhaps a body of pilgrims—all depending on the particular work before you—but that work will begin to have charms for you such as you never quite suspected or expected! It is this added insight into the compositions of the masters which very much more than merely pays for all our best efforts to become better acquainted with them.

Rehearsing-time is always a very hard time: also, it is mostly a very "hot" time, which is why it is suggested that you leave temper outside and come inside with a perfect patience-aura! You will have to know your own work; you will have to watch the director's stick; you will have to hear yourself singing and to carefully guard yourself from slipping from the key; you will need fullest control of your whole mind and body—and a little case of "nerves" will not make any of us the least bit happier! You should try to remember this, and when your neighbor is singing a half-mile off key, don't grin and giggle—and don't laugh because the director raps for silence: don't show your neighbor his error—the director will do that much better and more competently than you could ever hope to do it! When you get the signal to stop,—stop,—and at once! If the signal concerns you,

learn its cause, and then, when told to do so, do your best to smooth out the error; that spells progress; and progress is what we are after!

And when the director calls for "a," (on the piano), please don't show him how good your ear is, how much of thorough-pitch you possess—you may be a too grave disappointment to him, for he may expect too much of you; besides, confidence is rarely hurt when mixed with a little modesty—is it?

Remember, also, that a chorus may be called upon to "act"; you may have to march, or even to sway—the librettist and composer, aided by the director, (who has become their representative, or, at least, their interpreter), will have designated all that—and it is yours not to reason why—it is yours to do so well that there will be no cause to clean up the stage—due to a mere matter of vegetables and eggs in various states and conditions! Perhaps there is somewhat of humor here,—but, believe me—there will be no humor there on the stage after it has happened,—so let us make very certain that it shall not be our lapses which shall induce any audience before which we may appear, to hold anything for us except the very highest esteem, and the keenest desire to hear us again, because of our artistic presentation of the work which has been performed. For this, too, spells progress—and so, you see, it is the rehearsal which gives us the proof that we are moving forward and always forward!

And, too, just as the chorus, ballet, and orchestra have rehearsed, drilled, studied, and worked, so have the principals; separately, at first, then together, until they, too, are as perfect in their work as it is possible to make them: then, and only then, can orchestra, principals, chorus, and ballet, meet together, work together—win together! And about that time our manager and his assistants will begin to talk of performance-time—but that leads us to the next chapter!

Well—no: not without giving us sufficient opportunity for just a little more in the way of rehearsing!

CHAPTER X.

Casting Our Characters

THE first principals of our company, that is to say, those whose duty it will be to portray the leading roles in such works as we shall have the pleasure and privilege to present, will come from the choirs of the various churches in our community. I believe that this will be so in a vast majority of instances, and, without doubt, this will be a better course to pursue—the inviting of good, tried voices, so easily found and so readily organizeable, to come in with us on the "ground floor," so to say, and to stay with us and grow up with us—rather than to submit to that long-drawn-out, and all-too-often nerve-racking as well as heart-breaking hunt, hither and yon, for such material as may be worked up into, (one almost said whipped into), proper condition for the arduous service which must be rendered—and remember that such service must be given to our organization with such cheerfulness and graciousness as only the very great can give—and altogether without hope, desire, or expectation, of anything in the way of monetary recompense for time and effort which undoubtedly would bring a much merited reward.

But once we have secured this material, these voices known to have won real recognition in our community, and perhaps even beyond its borders,—what then? It will be here that our manager's first troubles will begin! It will be here that he will have need for all his powers of judgment! It will be here that his best efforts as a diplomat are most likely to be called into play, constant play! For Everybody will want to sing just that particular role! Yes—Everybody knows that THAT role is HER very best role,—why, Anybody will tell you that THAT tenor part just exactly and most precisely fits HIM—and so Nobody, (save, perhaps only our manager), dare step into the middle of the ring, hold the floor, and say his say with the results not guaranteed!

Scene from "The King's Henchman," by Deems Taylor

However, this "game" is worth the fight—every bit of the fight! For courage and judgment win respect, and respect wins confidence, and with confidence,—why, with that brand of confidence it is very safe to predict that one will go quite a very long way on the road that leads to Success!

The Voices will not any too often agree with you. Truth to tell, much more often than not, Mr. Manager, the Voices will very radically disagree with you, even thoroughly—yes, and very heartily! They'll tell it to the whole wide world! They are most certainly going to resign--and it will be one of your very biggest jobs to keep them--just "going to" resign!

Now, everybody but the Average Singer knows that every role does not fit his Voice—no, not even though he be a tenor! And every other singer save only a tenor knows that not every role, even designated "only for tenors," will fit every tenor! But if the orchestral director tells anybody that—why he's an ass! And if the assistant manager should dare to be so bold as even to hint as much—well, what on earth could you expect from him?—what does HE know about it? So—don't you see? It stands like this, Mr. Manager! The job is yours! You will never have to beg anybody for that part of your trouble! It is yours, altogether yours—and you will carry the day only by proving yourself to be thoroughly conversant with the matter before us.

You must know that the kind of soprano that holds the leading role in Verdi's "La Traviata," is not the same kind of soprano who takes the heroine's part in Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde,"—and what is more, you must know why! And you must be able to show that your preference for this Certain Voice to portray that Particular Part is based on knowledge and not governed by personal liking, or prejudice—or anything else save only sound knowledge, coupled with your desire to do the best you can for and by your company. Possess that knowledge—and mix it with the judgment which Experience will bring you—and the singers will sing

for you, very gladly and very well,—even though in this particular matter only those whom you have chosen for those Certain and Particular Parts will agree with you! And, be it known—these will only agree with you insofar as they will admit that they fit Those Parts—but of course Everybody knew all about THAT,—and that, too, oh!, years and years before YOU discovered it!

Which is all very fine and quite dandy! This is the sort of thing for you to tell your children's children! We are interested in this, in this day and generation, only because of what the future may hold for the amateur opera companies which, we hope, will dot each American community even as these communities dot America! And if you will only start something along this line it will not be so very long before something interesting happens! Try it—and see!

Why did Caruso stick to "Rigoletto," and "Aida," and then go into "Otello"? Why did he wait for so long before attempting his now famous rendering of the part of Eleazer, in Halévy's "La Juive"? You should know all about that, Mr. Manager—it will help you make matters clearer to any to whom such matters must be made most clear.

It is not merely The Voice that counts, these days,—although The Voice will always count,—it is The Voice added to everything else that counts in a presentation on the stage,—and that includes acting, appearance, personality. The Voice must fit The Part just a little more closely than Any Other Voice—or else, for that Particular Part it is not The Voice—though it may study the role and be prepared in case of emergency as substitute, unless there be Another Voice that can better take the part. And so it goes! You must listen and analyze and gauge and measure and weigh and sort—and then, finally, you must decide! And just as you have done with This Voice, so you must do with That Voice—each must fit its part as nearly as may be; and so shall you have built up a powerful and telling cast of the characters which shall portray to your audience exactly what the librettist and composer had in mind to picture there upon the stage!

How does HE or SHE enunciate? Are we to give the performance in the original or dare we risk a translation into English? Some day that will not bother you so much, Mr. Manager; particularly when there are more operatic works written by Americans in their own language. But, unfortunately enough for our America, that day has not yet dawned! Now we must face the facts as they are: How is HIS German, HER French, THEIR Italian? How do THEY sing together? Can I arrange for a more perfect ensemble? How does this stage-picture compare with what you had in mind —with what went before and what is to follow? Is there anybody who could better bring out this or that role—and yet fit as well into the work as a whole?

These are some of the problems that will confront you, Mr. Manager, when it becomes your duty to say who shall sing this or that part,—when it becomes your duty to explain why So-and-So was not given this or that part to sing—and anything like, "Well, I didn't think HE could do it," or "Oh, well,—now you know what I think of May!"—well, you might just as well understand right at the start that your company is headed straight for the scrap-heap, if that is the hit-AND-miss way that you are going about it! Out with the facts—if you have facts! And if you are too busy to get in touch with the FACTS—then be square enough to make way for someone who is just a little less afraid of working to get knowledge into his head than you are!

You may talk matters over with your assistant managers, and indeed, you should: you may talk matters over with your stage director, and you'll be very wise to do that: you should consult with your orchestral director, and you will find his words worth hearing, without a doubt: you should keep your eyes open and your ears close to the ground —yes, and your mind open and your heart pretty well geared up! You should do all these things, by way of getting information! And then you should do a whole lot more, in an effort to get inside information if you think that, for any reason whatever, somebody is holding back something that you have the right, as manager of this company, to know!

And then you will begin to have opportunities for showing, in your calm and quiet way, that when we selected you as our manager, we surely did a very sensible thing, because you not only have the good common sense to go hunting for information, but you are of that rarer sort—you have the good common sense to make use of the information after which you went hunting!

Summing it up, it's just this way: Everybody else can "pass the buck"—and at last it reaches the manager. Get that straight; at LAST it reaches YOU! There isn't anyone else to whom you can pass it, not even to the press representative, he'll leave you for parts unknown, distant parts, too, suddenly, and maybe forever! No—you are the manager, and yours is the final "say"!

Well, then, there is nothing else to do about it, and so you might just as well begin to fit yourself for the job, especially since we've given it to you and you've got it! You'll have no end of headache, but there's the other side of the half-dollar, you know. And when we've won, and when we've put it over good and plenty and sufficiently largely and then just a little more to boot, why, then, about that time the real acid test will come to you! At that time will you say, "My company" or "Our company"? Will it be "we" or "I"?

Just remember this, Mr. Manager, especially while "casting"! Just recall that a swelled-headed manager BEFORE the performance is likely to be a sore-headed manager after that performance—yes sirree!,—for a mighty long time thereafter! And so it simmers down to just about this: a little knowledge may hurt a lot, but a lot of knowledge surely will help, however little! And the whole secret of casting a successful performance consists in getting those "helps" just a day before they are needed! Yes, but also in this: Remembering not to "mislay" those "helps," which is about the same as telling you not to be one of those who always shows everything that he knows!

So, remembering the foregoing, here is something it will pay you to investigate. The phonograph, rightly used, can

be of tremendous value to you in bringing you an intimate acquaintance with how the world's greatest artists have taken a particular role. With the proper records at hand and your phonograph where it belongs, you can hear as often as may be necessary, just exactly what you require to hear. Furthermore, when you want to make the matter as plain to the singer as it is possible to make it, you can give that singer an accurate demonstration as to what is wanted and just exactly how it is wanted. After all, being amateurs, we have the right to lean on everything that can help us. And the phonograph and its records can be of tremendous help to us —from these we can come close to Tradition, which, properly mixed with Interpretation comes pretty close to being Art. Now, of course, nobody wants Mollie to be a Polly; the ways of the parrot will get us nowhere. But we do want to know just how far we can go and still be true to the composer and his score.

And you might pass this on to our conductor. After having reached a very friendly accord with a score, it might be well for him to put said score aside and listen, with both his ears, to a record of what he intends to present with our orchestra, or some particular portion of the opera that we have set ourselves to perform. Having listened as carefully and attentively as may be, then, with the score before him, he can note exactly where the various instruments enter and just exactly what they do and how they do it. Tempo can thus be learned, for one thing. Here, too, can be mastered the art of conducting; after the composition has been learned, uncalled for mannerisms, so distasteful to the critical, can be corrected. To this end practice before a mirror. And since the record can be repeated at will, or stopped here and there as often as may be required, each and every beauty of the score can become always more clear. The record may be used to advantage, also, to show the orchestra just how the work should sound when correctly performed. Altogether, when judiciously used, the record can become something upon which we may lean our whole weight with the utmost confidence.

Whenever such a thing is possible, give a role to someone who is in our chorus, provided only that he or she can take care of that role and do it justice! Slowly it may be, but it will be all the more surely, that we will be in a position to depend upon ourselves and seek outside help always less and less. I am not willing to be misunderstood here: I want it very distinctly understood that you, as our manager, will always deem it a great privilege to hear a "new" voice, and to make that voice a part of our company if you can, and to give that voice every fair and square chance. Just so, too, you will hold it a privilege to examine every new work that is shown you, and you will produce that work if and when you can, without fear or favor. Recall that ours is an American organization—therefore be fair and free from prejudice. Remember that we are pioneering in this field, and are made up of that kind of stuff that isn't afraid to dare a little in order to do a little! Be on the lookout for good voices: be on the watch for good works: above all, be the manager who does the thing just a little ahead of, and just a little better than any other manager. And if you can do this much for us, Mr. Manager, why most of us will forgive you many things—perhaps even your particularly all-fired fool way of casting!

CHAPTER XI.

Final Touches

LET us assume, now, that we have made much progress, and that we have gone very far along that road which leads to a public performance of whatever work we may have set ourselves to produce. Whether it be a work for our orchestra, or our chorus or ballet in conjunction with our orchestra, or whether it be a full operatic production which entails the participation of all of the various sections of our company, from now until our public performance we proceed along certain very definite lines. And, to achieve anything that shall even approach artistic success, we must be most careful and exact in the observation of particular regulations, from which no single deviation may be made without thereby courting more or less complete failure, insofar as the production of a work of art is concerned. For, be it remembered, at all times by each and every one of us, that, while a financial success will of course mean very much to us, an artistic success will mean a very great deal more to us, because it will give our company its reason for existence, and by doing just that, our company's life will have been insured, if not actually assured.

First of all, then, we must never permit any persons outside of the personnel of our company, to be present while we are rehearsing. They must not see us at our worst, nor may they be allowed to note our improvement. Outsiders must, so far as we are concerned, remain on the "outside" until we are ready to invite them to our "dress rehearsal," or until we are ready for our public performance. Move from this very firm stand, and we invite slip-up after slip-up, perhaps even the defeat of all our noble aims!

Next in order of consideration, we come to the fact that, as soon as we shall have reached that place in our work where we are drilling the work as a whole, which is to say, when all

those who are to participate in the work have made an approximate approach to a proper presentation of it, then we should leave our usual meeting-place and thereafter do our drilling on a stage. This will not only open up to us all the mysteries of Stage-Land, but, in addition, it will give us stage-confidence—something very much to be desired, since, without this, we are more than likely to remind our audiences of a very "awkward squad," and that, of course, we are most desirous to avoid. We will not wait, altogether, for perfection; rather we will anticipate perfection. To acquire that certainty of movement, to become familiar with the proper atmosphere to give an accurate portrayal of the work in hand, and more especially whenever this work has anything whatever in common with the stage, then the sooner we can arrange to do this work on a stage, the more readily will we gain that poise which really means so much to us, and which will unquestionably help us to put our work, (and, of course that means ourselves), across the footlights.

Here, then, assuming that we are presenting some operatic work, we shall become actually acquainted with entrance and exit, with position and situation, with properties and with scenes. Here, too, we learn "cues" and "cuts," and all those various and sometimes most intricate matters with which we must become familiar if we are to work upon a stage. Here, also, but somewhat later on, we note the rise and fall of the curtain, and finally, for our "dress rehearsal," we appear garbed in the precise costumes in which we are to portray our roles when we actually present our performance.

So that, as you will have already observed, these various rehearsals are just so many steps toward actual presentation of the work before us. Even the orchestra, performing alone and in concert formation, will do well to do some of its drilling on a stage. This will relieve its members of that embarrassment which becomes so painfully apparent to the audience. The ballet must know the stage and the chorus should

certainly know the stage. Principals can not work without knowledge of the stage; and so it becomes obvious that, however fine our work as individuals may be, the work as a whole may and must suffer, perhaps very grievously, without our possessing a complete knowledge of what each of us is scheduled to accomplish, in just exactly the manner in which this schedule is to be carried out. And that means stage-drill right on a stage!

And when this knowledge has become ours, what then? Why then we have reached that goal for which we have striven so mightily! For we shall be ready to give an actual performance before a public which has paid real coin of the realm for the privilege of enjoying our performance. And so, just to make everything as certain and as positively sure as humans well can make such matters, why, then we shall have recourse to—another rehearsal!

This rehearsal, our "dress-rehearsal," must be given on the stage upon which we are scheduled to perform. Such a rehearsal almost partakes of an actual performance, and, as a matter of fact, it should, for all purposes, be regarded as our actual first performance, even though we are performing before a privately invited audience. Because we shall invite the members of the press to this performance, and we shall invite those most prominent in our community to see us at our work. And therefore we shall want to be at our best, and in proper winning form. And to accomplish all of that, we must be practically perfect, for we shall have no more opportunities for friendly drill, no more chances for those friendly corrections and criticisms from those who are drilling us. We shall stand alone, and the consequences must be ours, alone! Although this must not be our very first lesson in assuming these responsibilities! For if our manager has been wise, he will have witnessed a performance or two, (but without costume, perhaps), before permitting such a long step as the "dress-rehearsal."

Now, everybody who is connected with our work even in the most remote capacity, will come in for his definite part in the work. Those scheduled to take part as ushers, will know what they have to do. The "gas-man" will perform his best feats of lighting: the curtain-raisers, the scene-shifters, the doorman,—each will do his part. Even our press representative will have to work, (but his work, let us hope, has been well planned and executed up to now), else it may be entirely too late for him to do himself justice; and unless he has done justice to himself he will have done his company a very grave injustice!

What I want to pass on to you, here, is the fact that, for the first time, perhaps, you will see the whole machine at work, and be, thereby, placed in the position of seeing a company actually operating—unless, as very well may happen, your own particular duties shall have so deeply engrossed your attention that you have neither time nor inclination to watch the others at work—which will be very well for you, because it will prove your powers of concentration, your very deep interest, your unswerving attention to the duty before you—and, of course these spell success more or less largely!

This "dress-rehearsal," which marks and must mark the culmination of all our efforts, should be given a night or two before our performance, but the closer to the time of our public performance, the better it will be for us, provided only that we have a sufficient opportunity to rest before being called upon to actually face our very expectant public. We should have time to freshen up, but we must not have time enough in which to stiffen up! Against that process of "stiffening" we must be on guard! That must be prevented by every possible means and at every cost!

And having come this far, and having made all matters as practically perfect as it has been within our power to make them, and having done each and every little, minor, trivial

thing which, however small or slight, might in any way contribute its particular detail to the success of our enterprise as a whole, why, then, there is nothing left for us except to remember that we shall have absolutely no reason whatever to think of anything else than our work, and insofar as we shall have cleared our minds of everything else except this work of ours, why, then, in this work of ours we shall succeed! Yes, indeed—and perhaps very far beyond even our best expectations! Ah, well, all our trials and troubles will seem little enough to us now! They were worth their full price and we haven't one single complaint to make! For we've put it over! We've made good! And the only thing that we have to do is to do it again tomorrow night at our public performance! And then—why, we'll just do it a little better! That's all!

CHAPTER XII.

The Performance

AND now we have reached our goal! It is Performing-Time! We are all ready for the signal for our orchestra to begin the playing of the overture, that is if the work which we have set ourselves to do, has an overture. Here we are, chorus, ballet and principals, (of course that is to say, if our opera calls for chorus, or ballet, or both—as it very well may since it very often does; without the principals we just simply can not perform an opera!), dressed as we are to appear in this particular performance, the stage set for the first scene, everybody keyed up, everybody all tensed, everybody letter-perfect, everybody certain and sure of a fine performance—and then what? Well, here is something that will fairly closely approximate our story.

Our manager will, of course, be on hand. He will be everywhere, but not in a helter-skelter way. He will have "timed" himself. And in the event of the very slightest emergency, he will be found ready to go upon the stage with the word that shall calm and quiet, since it shall bring reassurance, to the audience. In other words, our manager will on no account leave the theatre during a performance! He may not see much of what we are doing, but he must be always ready to take the wheel, for our performance is very much like a ship: it can run into a very heavy "squall," as a matter of fact, it very often happens that the audience knows nothing about the more thrilling "show"! That part of the "entertainment" is the one which we are careful to conceal!

The assistant managers are somewhat more "stationary." One will stand at the main-entrance, just back of the ticket-taker. His post there is to settle any little argument that may arise as to the proper credentials entitling a person

to admission—without paying for that privilege. If he knows his job, and he should, he will see very few reasons for admitting anybody who does not show a ticket! The press representative, who will stand beside him, will have taken proper care of the press: each of these gentlemen should have received two tickets, and these should be practically the only free tickets which have been issued! Something will have gone radically wrong if this rule has had to be broken!

The press representative, (just before-mentioned), will long ago have acquainted our local papers, and such others as he may have succeeded in interesting in our company and its work,—and most especially our company in this particular work,—with everything that can win a legitimate story: as a matter of fact, he will have sent them suitable reports; and now representatives of these papers will soon begin to appear. Mr. Press Representative is waiting there to greet them, and to admit any to whom he has committed the never-to-be-forgotten oversight of failure to send tickets for this performance! But he has another post. When the performance has begun, and when the representatives of the press have been properly accounted for, then our press representative will be found in the press room, (or what does duty for it!), where tables and chairs, with copy-paper, etc., have been properly arranged; for some of these newspapermen will want to write their stories before leaving the theatre, maybe: others will simply make their notes; others will seemingly make no notes at all until reaching the telegraph office! And Mr. Press Representative will show his "influence" by having that telegraph office kept open especially for that reason! Also, he will have a choice line of photographs, perhaps a "scene" or two, ready for these gentlemen. He will do everything that a good press representative does to make our performance the success that it should be; and that means that he will have sent out plenty of "advance" stories, which have been sufficiently "good" to win for us a "follow-up" story, (that is to say an "after-story"), which shall be at last just "as good!" In other

words, he will have been, and for sometime will continue to be, a very busy man! And if anything should go wrong—why then he will be a very much busier man! For, among other things, he will have to set things "right!"

The orchestral conductor will occupy his chair. The stage director, the chorus director, the ballet director, each will be where he is most required, with his "charges!" Should we be so fortunate as to have more than one assistant manager, then he, or they, not already accounted for, will be somewhere in the "house"—but NOT occupying seats—these being too valuable and too saleable! These gentlemen, as well as our secretaries, will be scattered over the "house"; their positions will vary, but they will move, mostly, back somewhere along the walls, not remaining in any one place long enough to become supporters thereof, and not moving about conspicuously. Their business is to be the eyes of the management: to see what the manager should have seen; that the audience is properly seated, and that order is maintained, and that all those present are adequately cared for. Because we are hoping that this audience of ours will leave us a little more friendly than when it arrived. Their business, too, is to be the ears of the management, and to hear what the manager himself should have heard. They will listen for comment; they will listen for criticism, while keeping strictly "out" of anything pertaining to either. Their business, you will observe, is to note and to report. They will not "meet" their friends, though they may greet them,—they are watchmen patrolling—and this they must never permit to pass from their minds. In case of emergency they become the active aids of the manager—helping to calm the audience, or, if need be, to expedite its removal from whatever threatens. Therefore they will carefully note that the fire-laws are strictly observed, and that the exits are kept perfectly free.

The treasurer's place is at the box-office. There he will watch the sale of the tickets. After the first act, he will count up, separating the "dead wood," (meaning thereby the

"passes," the complimentary tickets, etc.), from those which have been paid for, and thereby bringing the receipts of the performance right up to the minute. As a rule, complimentary tickets, (such as those issued to the representatives of the newspapers), are "punched": in this way they are very easily recognized. But our treasurer will have performed other and more active duties. He will have been the chairman of our program committee; he will have supervised the sale of advertising space in that program; he will have originated schemes not only for the sale of such "space," but, in addition, of tickets, as well. For instance, he will, perhaps, induce the leading merchants of our community, and perhaps of nearby communities, to offer tickets in connection with certain sales—perhaps it may be that two tickets are given each Saturday night as the result of a "lucky number" contest, the number drawn to correspond to that on some sales-slip: he will have very carefully "proof-read" the program, so that it may be perfectly correct in every detail; he will, in short, have done anything and everything which might in any way contribute to the financial success of our enterprise,—for just exactly that is his business! We can not live by Art alone, for Art must be properly supported; and only good currency can properly support Art. Wherefrom it will have been gathered that we are striving and must always continue to strive for a double-sided success; artistically victorious and financially a failure is, of course, to be preferred to a financial success coupled to an artistic fiasco, but these must tend to narrow our field and, perhaps, shorten our life. To win well and properly, we must win on both sides, and the brunt of the financial battle will fall directly to the lot of our treasurer.

And all this—just before the orchestra begins to play!

Thereafter? Well, thereafter is quite another story! Part of it we may read about in the press of the morning after—let us hope it may be a very fine, bright, sun-shiny day, and not a cold, grey, dawn! Part of it may come dribbling through; and we must be mighty careful as to that

"part"! Part of it we may never know,—should never know,—for it is none of our business, we of the "outside," who have merely paid the price of admission; who are we, anyway? But ALL of the story our manager MUST know! He can not work with any hope of success without such knowledge! If his "eyes" and "ears" have informed him fully and accurately, the company may be expected to do better work next time, and this, no matter how finely it has worked, this time! Without this knowledge there is ever-present danger of slip-ups, and, as elsewhere pointed out, these little, minor, trivial slip-ups will undermine our best efforts, so we will not allow them to occur! We will meet, and discuss, and modify, and rearrange, if necessary: if not, we will move on, doubly confident, toward our next performance! Which we will make all the more certain of glorious success by working in all directions, not forgetting rehearsing!

IN CONCLUSION

WE have come a long way over what must have proved a most interesting road. We have seen our company grow from a mere nucleus to a real power for good in our community. And from our experience we will have learned that pretty girls and witty fellows can make a town much snappier and much happier!

We have seen that, through our company, we can give our community many forms of musical art. Our orchestra can give concerts: with our orchestra our ballet can present pantomimic plays: our chorus can perform, either by itself or with the aid of our orchestra: our principals may present themselves either in recital or with our orchestra: our chorus, principals and orchestra may appear in oratorio and opera, (and when the ballet is needed, as it very often is, in opera, it will be ready and willing to serve): and then, just by way of a change—our little company may vary all this "high-brow stuff"—and perform some good comic opera!

What? Do you sneer at what has just been suggested? Then try it and see! Just see what a Gilbert and Sullivan work can do for us! And then give some of our own Gilberts and Sullivans their chance! Remember that we hear the master works of the master composers, only these! Remember that there are operas by even such as Verdi and Wagner that are not produced. Remember that for our American art to grow, we must have American artists and American musical creators! Remember that we shall lose everything by crowding foreign art and artist out, but that we can never hope to gain anything at all unless we crowd American art and artist in! Remember that the artist becomes an artist through experience, and that a composer becomes a better composer after having heard his work, so give them their chance! Remember that our organization

is pledged to do just exactly this, and to pass on what good we have found to our sister-communities! And then, some day, perhaps at a nearer time than appears safe or even sane to predict at this moment, each thriving American community will have good cause to boast of its amateur opera company, which has helped in building said community's good name!

And in that day America will be able to point with pride to plenty of fine American artists, who shall be proud and happy to appear in up-standing American art works, which shall be the peer of anything produced by anybody, anywhere! And when that day has come, we, of this little amateur opera company may point, as modestly as may be, to the fact that we helped to put it over, that we helped to build it up, that we helped to pass it on—that, perhaps, we were the very first of all those who now hold the field, to be in that field!

And should any of my readers be really hungry for glory, then let him or her, without further delay, begin the work of organizing an amateur opera company. At first you will be so occupied that there will be small opportunity to watch this glory grow, but you may depend upon it that the glory will grow and continue to grow, until, at last, it shall actually cover the land!

Yes—if you want an American Art you may have an American Art, but to have your American Art you must build your American Art, and to build your American Art surely, firmly, strongly, and securely, let the foundation be the building of the amateur opera company!